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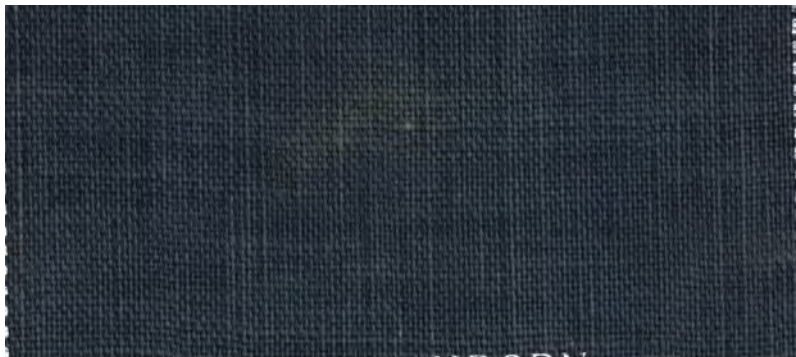
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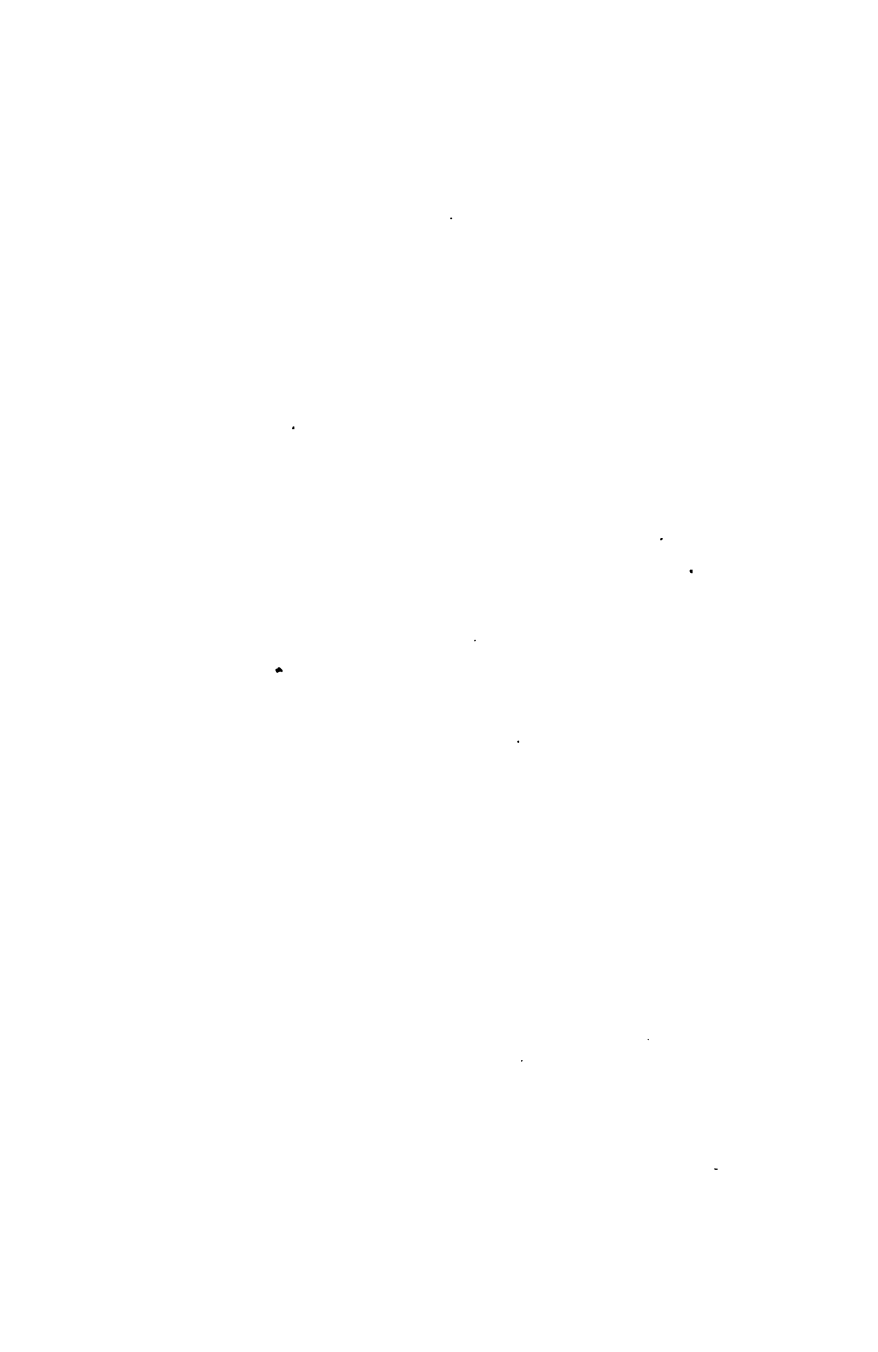




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New York: D. APPLETON & CO., 72 Fifth Avenue.

# Abandoning An Adopted Farm

BY

KATE SANBORN

AUTHOR OF

WIT OF WOMEN; HOME PICTURES OF ENGLISH POETS; VANITY  
AND INSANITY, SHADOWS OF GENIUS; SUNSHINE AND  
RAINBOW CALENDARS; ADOPTING AN ABANDONED  
FARM; A TRUTHFUL WOMAN IN SOUTHERN  
CALIFORNIA; ETC.



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# ABANDONING AN ADOPTED FARM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### TRUTHFUL SKETCHES.

"There is nothing so improbable as truth."

EDITH BROWER.

Yes, strange as it may seem, I am forced by the pressure of circumstances, to leave the dearly-beloved Farm of my Adoption; but not from caprice or lack of interest (or capital) in this place, now reclaimed and beautified. Determined always to see the sunny side, I rejoice in the prospect of more land to till—land that is now my own—more complete solitude, and comparative freedom from the inquisitiveness and persistence of passers-by, tramps, small boys with kleptomaniac tendencies, agents, peddlers, bores of all kinds, the insistent shriek of the rushing

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locomotive, and strangers from near and far who insist on seeing my hens!

A former cook, corpulent Bessie, used to exclaim, "Heaven helping me, I'll never leave the bandaged farm!" But a thriving Dutchman courted her, and appropriated her ample proportions, raising her to a higher social position; for, as his father said at the wedding: "My son has a beautiful brofession. He is a blumber." So, in spite of her fixed intentions, she is now only a fat memory.

She was a devout Catholic, almost too devout. In the midst of preparations for a dinner for city guests, who were waiting, I have noticed her in a corner murmuring prayers over her beads; and when a friend cut his finger and ejaculated a hasty "O Lord!" she raised her eyes, folded her hands and responded reverently, "Amen!"

She was always making genuine Irish bulls, as when she said, on hearing me complain of my immense grain bills, "If I were you, Miss, I wouldn't keep any cows this winter—but the horse."

But she has gone with her warm heart,

good-natured face, and the piano legs she was proud to display in a clumsy dance of her own invention, with its singing accompaniment of "Idely, idely, idely, ide."

I also supposed I should live and die right here, and I too must depart.

The general air of suspicion with which the statements in my book are received, and the fact that it is classed as "Fiction" in public libraries, are disheartening. I judge that the plain everyday, out-and-out truth is so seldom told that it is not easily recognized.

A novelist has assured me that where he made up plots of the most startling kinds, the reviewers and readers pronounced them true to Nature and life, an absolute reproduction of the secrets and mysteries, bliss and agonies of love or passion. But where he ventured to tell of events which had really happened, hearts that had truly broken, every one had condemned his work as unnatural, unreal, improbable, impossible.

Another writes : " My difficulty has been, when I looked about me for suggestive

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matter, to find things that I dared to tell; and it is a fact that not one person in ten can pick out the true from the false in a work of fiction. If ever I have introduced a veritable incident, that is the point upon which some one or other is sure to put his finger and say, '*This* you invented,' letting my pure fabrications pass unnoticed. Once I ventured to write down a whole story almost exactly as it had happened, adding, by way of setting only, a sort of prologue and epilogue. An editor returned it with the stricture, 'Too intentionally pathetic!' I was reminded of the ornithologist who criticised an owl in a shop window. 'The man who stuffed that owl,' he said, 'knew nothing whatever of the genus *Strix*.' As he discoursed upon the true anatomy of owls, enforcing his argument by the dreadful example in the window, the dreadful example winked at him, thereby cutting short the discourse and saddening that wise man.

"I often wish I had tried saddening my editor, by showing him how *unintentionally* pathetic real life can sometimes be. I politely refrained from doing so, but

since then I have concluded that artistic verities are a humbug, and more than ever do I hug to my heart this motto of my own invention : *Anything may happen.*"

There are things said to me every week of my life, so queer, that it does seem as if I had made them up "out of whole cloth"; but no one can do this successfully in the line of original sayings.

For instance, I offered some of Huyler's best the other day to an old man who had brought me some extra fine popcorn as a gift, and he said : " Bless you, I can't do nothin' with it ; I haven't got but one upper teeth ! " No one could evolve that statement, nor the question and remarks of the interested old lady who called on me to beg some silk pieces to patch up. Running up and down stairs during the search, I became decidedly flushed, and she queried, " Do you ever have fits ? " " Why, no—certainly not," I gasped ; " why do you say that ? " " Well, I suppose you know you're built just right for fits." And as I panted harder at such a fearful foreboding, she added, musingly, " Yes, just the build for fits."



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And I recall another blow to my vanity. I asked a carpenter working for me to adorn a cracked and weather-beaten door with some putty and a coat of paint. "Yes'm," he replied; "paint and putty will fix up a thing wonderful. Lots o' humbly people use paint and putty. But I guess you and I hain't tried it yet."

Another woman caller said, as she left, "As you seem destined to the fine arts, hens, and vegetables, I'm sure you would enjoy our county fair!"

Could any one invent this combination?

Nevertheless, my stories are considered the wildest romancing.

My present cook tells me that a friend has written her, "Do see if there is any 'dark room' there, or a stuffed peacock, for I never could believe it."

In summer time I delight in roaming over the fields, followed by a flock of hungry hens or frolicsome dogs. I like to dig and plant, and, never having wed,\* it seems to me as if I might be left to

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\* My youthful assistant says, "I have wed so fur to-day."

weed in peaceful seclusion and work unobserved. But passing vehicles are sure to slow up, eager faces peer forth, and I am stared at as a free show. I hear, too, the unreserved comments, the interrogations and replies, as "There she goes, behind those tall hollyhocks. Well, she does look kind o' farmerlike, sure enough," or "Is it the slim one going in, or the fat woman by the fence?" And again: "Who is it that lives here now? Why, it's that Kate Sanborn, who writes lots of love stories, and gets well paid, I guess. She's an old maid." "Well, anybody would know that by those damdold lanterns hung round the piazza."

When I had the honor of entertaining a Hindoo monk last summer, a man of wondrous learning, eloquence, and philanthropy, the excitement rose to fever height.

I had met him in the observation car of the Canadian Pacific, where even the gigantically grand scenery of mountains, cañons, glaciers, and the Great Divide could not take my eyes entirely from the cosmopolitan travellers, all *en route* for

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Chicago. Parsees from India, Canton merchant millionaires, New-Zealanders, pretty women from the Philippine Isles married to Portuguese and Spanish traders, Japanese dignitaries with their cultivated wives and collegiate sons, high bred and well informed, etc.

I talked with all. They cordially invited me to visit them at their respective homes, and I, nothing abashed, spoke in rather glowing terms of my rural residence, and gave each my card, with "Metcalf, Mass.," as permanent address.

I alluded to the distinguished men and women in Boston and vicinity who were frequently my guests, and assured all of a hearty welcome at my farm.

But most of all was I impressed by the monk, a magnificent specimen of manhood—six feet two, as handsome as Salvini at his best, with a lordly, imposing stride, as if he ruled the universe, and soft, dark eyes that could flash fire if roused or dance with merriment if the conversation amused him.

He wore a bright yellow turban many yards in length, a red ochre robe, the

badge of his calling; this was tied with a pink sash, broad and heavily befringed. Snuff-brown trousers and russet shoes completed the outfit.

He spoke better English than I did, was conversant with ancient and modern literature, would quote easily and naturally from Shakespeare or Longfellow or Tennyson, Darwin, Müller, Tyndall; could repeat pages of our Bible, was familiar with and tolerant of all creeds. He was an education, an illumination, a revelation!

I told him, as we separated, I should be most pleased to present him to some men and women of learning and general culture, if by any chance he should come to Boston.

We parted. I fatigued myself into positive illness by my pedestrian and cerebral exertions at the Exposition, and all that motley assemblage, with minds as diverse as their raiment, was only a highly colored fantasy of the past.

Just risen from a sick bed, I received a telegram of forty-five words announcing that my reverend friend of the observa-

tion car was at the Quincy House, Boston, and awaiting my orders.

Then I remembered vividly. I had urged him to accept my hospitalities if he felt lonely or needed help. I had promised those introductions to Harvard professors, Concord philosophers, New York capitalists, women of fame, position, and means, with brilliant gifts in writing and conversation. It was mid-August. Not a soul was in town, and how could I entertain my gayly appareled pundit? I was aghast, but telegraphed bravely: "Yours received. Come to-day; 4.20 train, Boston and Albany."

As the cars stopped, even the piercing whistle had a derisive sound, and I trembled at the effect he might produce on the crowd gathered for the mail. But he was received in breathless silence. He was such a surprise!

If he had looked regal but bizarre among a group collected from all nations, he was simply amazing on the platform at Gooseville. His luggage was so considerable in amount that the train was ten minutes late at the next stopping place.

He had brought almost a Bodleian Library with him of books recondite and rare, heavy in either sense.

The yellow headgear looked a brighter yellow than before.

The mulberry pink sash failed to harmonize at all with the red robe. He seemed slightly surprised by the simplicity and quiet of the place, but was too courteous to speak of it.

He never minded the stares and grins that were most evident to me. "Shall I give up the costume of my forefathers?" he sensibly inquired. "Shall you adopt the trailing robes of our women when you visit India?" It is only our bad manners and ignorance that make us think everything is queer, ludicrous, or wrong that differs from our own way. Rose Terry Cooke told me that in a little town where she once lived they spoke of every stranger as a "furriner," and there were dislike and a lurking contempt in the way the word was used. So with my "furriner."

But the climax was reached the next morning, when he was sitting on the porch

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wrapped in deepest thought—or, rather, endeavoring to exclude all thought from his active mind, and thus give room for divine light and communications to flow in. As he sat there, immovable, with eyes vacant and fixed, striving for an approximate condition of Nirvana, Bill Hanson came round the back way, staring, half awe-struck, half amused, and said to my man: "Gosh all hemlock! What has she got now, and how did she make it?"

He inclined to the theory that it was either a lifelike wax figure, or a huge rag doll, which I had built and painted and stationed there for effect and the wonderment of the public.

How could I imagine that? So, please, in future believe implicitly my truthful tales. It was trying and vastly embarrassing to have my Oriental visitor inquire in rotund but melancholy and doubting tones: "Where *are* these influential gentlemen, these women you promised me? I must see them, and begin my struggle for my poor people."

The mail bag was stuffed next morning with frantic appeals for help, and I am

proud to say that my friends rallied nobly from their vacation haunts by seashore, lake, and mountain, and my careless promise was through them most gloriously fulfilled.

O dear! I can not help laughing here all by myself at the remembrance of one evening when fully a dozen ladies were gathered around my honored guest, looking at him admiringly and at each other with approving words as he explained at length his creed and philosophy and plans for bringing the wretched masses in India out of their poverty and suffering by introducing a little of our practical way of earning money. Then he told us that "the soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose center can be everywhere, and that the universe is a power composed of the Great Infineet, and each separate world a distinct meter or rhythm."

My overstrained mind began to wobble, and I found I was sitting on the edge of my chair, with eyes aching from a prolonged stare of wonder, my mouth positively ajar, like a rustic at a muster; and



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as he talked on and on in glowing rhapsody, I suddenly saw myself as an extremely mature American Desdemona, listening intently to the marvelous eloquence of my Bengalese Othello. I left the circle to indulge in immoderate, half-hysterical laughter all alone. I had achieved success, but I, too, had to "struggle."

He called me "Mother" at parting—an especial tribute to any woman in India, as he explained. I appreciated the compliment. I was proud of such a son, yet—and yet it was somehow a trifle depressing. Of course, I did not expect my fascinating guest to prostrate himself before me, and, laying flowers at my feet, chant a song of worshipful admiration, as he had said was the proper thing to do on meeting a young and beautiful woman. Oh, no, I didn't sigh for that lovely attention; but to change instantaneously from a Desdemona, however old, to a sort of spinsterial Cornelia, the adopted mother of a Hindoo Gracchus, it was either sad or supremely funny, with a leaning toward pathos.

Later, a note of inquiry as to my where-

abouts was received from the senior Parsee, a most interesting personage, but I let it remain unanswered. Very rude, but I knew I could not do this sort of thing twice with the same *éclat*.

The sensation produced is not yet entirely a thing of the past. A friend passing my home in the car overheard the following dialogue between two Irish women as they looked out upon my humble residence :

"And is that the place where the Hindoo praaste was entertained?" "Yes, it is, but he was not a praaste at all; it is a moonke he was." "Well, to my mind it's a mighty poor place to be entertainin' either a moonke or a praaste!"

I'm not especially sensitive, still could not be called a pachyderm, and this continual criticism is distressing. I want to hide away in deeper depths of seclusion, where I can wear overalls if I want to, and cowhide boots, mount or try to mount a bicycle in my own grounds, and entertain the Wild Man of Borneo if he should "just come to town," without a chorus of invidious comment.

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My unfeigned interest in hens and model hen-houses causes me another trial. The moment any one ventures to keep more than fifty fowls, he ceases to be a private individual with personal rights and is the property of the public. Visitors to my poultry yard come uninvited, wander where they choose, borrowing ideas and disparaging my system, and if I step out they regard me with surprise as an undesired intruder. One man, who preached Sundays and was a butcher weekdays, supplying sausages or salvation, came until I ventured to remonstrate, and his amazement was intense.

"I saw you had an extensive 'hen plant,' and couldn't dream you would object to my copying your good ideas."

A professional poultry raiser, a good friend of mine, agrees with me that the visitor question *is* pressing, and the persecuted poultryman should have his side better understood. "Why should a raiser of poultry be considered the legitimate prey of every son of Adam blessed (?) with a little curiosity? Directly a man has put up a poultry house, and a couple

of dozen fowls are seen about the place, every passer stops and says (to himself): 'Hello! here's a hen man. I'll go in and see what he's got to say about the chicken business!' and in he drives, jumps out of his carriage, and expects you to show him about and entertain him with chunks of information about your methods of feeding, breeding, management, etc. He doesn't care whether you are busy or not. He simply has a little curiosity about the poultry business, and thinks you are in duty bound to 'stand and deliver' answers to his questions, and show him over the premises, so long as he has honored you with a call."

On Sundays, my place fills the vacancy made by lack of Sunday concerts or a cockpit or bullfight, and so many drove in that they had to be driven out. I can not convince the public that I am not running a show for all who care to inspect. And the remarks are so aggravating.

Lately my four hundred hens have been on a simultaneous strike—not one egg for six weeks. Each expert consulted gives

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a different theory and plan of action. All are tried—no effect. Other hen women seem to sniff it in the air and rejoice. One old dame said, with supercilious superiority: "I hear your hens ain't doing nothing. Mine are laying right along. I make a hundred and fifty dollars a year clear profit, and don't keep but a few neither. I don't never clean out my hen shed. Once a year pa he carts out a lot. Yours are too fancy and too fat. It's the mongrils that do the business. My, what a lot you got! Say, can't you give me that Plymouth Rock rooster?" (I had just purchased a beauty for ten dollars.) "He'd look well in my yard, and I like his crow. You'd never miss him."

When I mildly disagreed, she evidently thought me close and stingy, and left, remarking:

"Well, some folks have all their good things in this life, as the Bible says."

After she went, I wondered if a little wholesome neglect was as good occasionally for hens as for children, and recalled the bluff wisdom of our old butcher at home, who, seeing a little boy look rather

delicate, or, in his parlance, "measly," said: "You let him run and take care of himself, dig in the dirt all day, just grub 'round, and if he finds any worms let him eat 'em. Do him good. That's the way I raised my seven boys, and there ain't a healthier lot in the country."

He was a steady drinker, but seldom drunk. I can see his face before me. Snow-white, curly hair, red cheeks, with fine, purplish streaks (produced by good beef and poor whisky), sharp blue eyes, twinkling with fun. My father once asked him rather a pointed question: "Mr. Carson, what is it that gives you such a red face?" "Well, professor, I guess it's nothing but cider apple-sass. I'm uncommon fond of that, you know." When he was on his death-bed one of his life-long patrons called and endeavored to cheer him by saying how long he had been indebted to him for excellent meat. "Yes, squire, that's so, but you never knew how much I cheated you, just the same," and a semblance of the old twinkle came into the dull eyes.

Every little place has its unique char-

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acters, its eccentricities, only they are not chronicled. In my New Hampshire home they surely abounded.

There was old Increase Kimball, snowy-haired, with a long, white beard, which he had vowed never to shave; bent form, bright face, and his right hand permanently disabled from being once practically dealt with according to the New Testament injunction, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee." It will not do to indulge in a strictly literal interpretation of Bible commands. And poor Sally Duget, daughter of a popular physician, her life ruined, her child dead, herself insane, yet witty through it all. Her repartees were inimitable, and no one could attempt a word contest with her without being beaten. She would wander down from her forlorn hut on a distant hillside to get her pail filled with food and ask for a cup of tea, and no one could get the better of her quick wit. One day she had decked herself with some showy bit of faded finery, and a gentleman, passing, stopped her with the question, "Well, Sally, are you going to get married?"

"Yes," she cried, with her dark eyes flashing, "if you and I can make a bargain."

It is rather risky to venture on the interrogative form of warfare with a bright woman, even when demented.

And the old storekeeper, who had been very profane and converted late in life, could not always control his speech. During a revival prayer meeting in the schoolhouse some wicked boys put pepper on the red-hot stove, causing an epidemic of sneezing. He was praying fervently, but stopped to sneeze, then exclaimed: "By ——! There's enemies to religion in this house! H'ist the windows!"

The seriously disabled Elder Hodgkins, who had a game eye, two game legs, and as much difficulty in articulation as in locomotion, thought himself a match for the fairest maiden on earth, and, although still a bachelor at sixty, kept on offering himself in rotation to every unappropriated girl, woman, or widow in town, and not a few in neighboring villages. His calls were late because, as he said in rau-



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cous, mumbling, "The Postal Department is very confining," but he stayed long enough to make up for that.

Once, when he had proposed for the second time to a rarely gifted woman so far above him that he must have been insane to hazard his fortune with her, he was kindly but firmly assisted to the door and launched forth on his homeward way, and the fatigued family sought needed repose.

About 1 A. M. a thumping at the door awakened the household, and, partially dressed, the head of the house went down, armed with a heavy cane, to discover the cause of the disturbance, and found the unfortunate elder on his back like a mammoth dorbug, sprawling helpless in the chill of a November night, unable to turn over. He had tottled back to meekly apologize for his temerity, and in his disappointment his legs were even less sure than usual.

He made another impressive *tableau vivant* when, after buying two dozen fresh eggs at the grocer's, he slipped while tottling down the steps and sat down heavily

in the center of the basket, producing a Turner-esque pastel effect (or perhaps it would belong more strictly to the French impressionist school) in the rear view as he was lifted up.

And that pioneer tramp, Webb Hall, who wandered about in picturesque rags begging for "cold victuals" from door to door, half-cracked, but sometimes shrewd enough. Some men, who happened to be Democrats, were rallying him about his appearance. "Yes, gentlemen," he replied, "you might take me to be a Democrat from my clothes, but I haven't got so low yet as to train with such company!"

Considering himself unjustly treated by a judge in the capital of the State, he did not turn to infernal machines, and did not dream of dynamite, but thirsted for revenge in a manly fashion, and would thus explain his plan of action: "I shall buy two guns, and go down to Concord and shoot Judge Bemis with one and kill myself with the other; or else I shall wait quietly till spring and see what will become of it."

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I also remember certain speeches which are worth preserving—as the statement of a witness when questioned as to the number of students who broke into his store for liquor, that as “near as he could make out there was betwixt six and seven.” (He afterward figured as the hero of Hoyt’s “Temperance Town.”)

Like the Irishman, who was superintending an excavation, shouting down to his “gang”:

“How many of ye’s down there?”

“Five,” was the reply.

“Half of ye’s come up here!”

I recall the puzzlement of old Lecount, over the river, who came one year to petition money to buy a cow, as his had tumbled over a precipice and broken its neck. It was given. But at the same time the next year he was round again for another bovine, saying, “It’s the singularest thing in natur’, but that plaguy critter went over the same precipice!”

And the retort of a bright Scotch woman, an old maid, who was gingerly questioned by a red-headed physician as to why she never got married: “Well, doctor, I’ll tell

you. I made up my mind early in life that nothing would induce me to marry a man with red hair, and no one else has ever proposed."

Or the exceeding optimism of an old fellow—tall, lanky, thin, with a narrow head and long, straight hair, to whom my father gave many articles of clothing. This time he had bestowed a "beaver," an old silk hat of abnormal size. It was tried on, and the entire head was completely obscured.

"You can't wear that," said father; "it's a mile too big for you."

"It *is* a leetle large," said the grateful recipient, reappearing from beneath the extinguisher, "but I'll take it along. My hair may thicken up."

Oh, yes, just keep your eyes and ears open, and you will soon find a wealth of material for character sketches wherever you may be. Or, to adapt whimsically from Shakespeare: "To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!"

## CHAPTER II.

### HIT OR MISS.

She talked of politics or prayers,  
Of Southey's prose or Wordsworth's sonnets,  
Of dangles or of dancing bears,  
Of battles or the last new bonnets.

W. M. PRAED.

I DESIRE to apologize to Foxboro' and every inhabitant thereof who may happen to know of my unintentional affront.

In giving the name of that large and prosperous town to the scenes of my tragi-comic initiation into an agricultural career, I never knew that such a place existed. And wanting to insinuate in a sly yet genial way that I had been considerably imposed upon, with the old game of Fox and Geese reversed, I said I was a goose at Foxboro', like a mouse at Catsville.

The game has been played. I was supposed to have some money and no experience; now it's the other way.

It must have been a poor joke, for no one ever saw the point or application, and I am obliged now to explain it at length, at the risk of being considered egotistic.

Perhaps a New Hampshire woman, transplanted early to New York, will be pardoned for not knowing all the tires of the immense wheel of which Boston is the Hub.

Egotism in print is not so insufferable as in close conversation. It is hard to escape from a garrulous bore at your elbow, but you can drop a paper or book instantler, or turn to a more promising page, or sink in peaceful slumber, narcotized by the tedious narrative.

So you will allow me to ramble on?

Reporters rushed to Foxboro' in hottest dog-dayest weather to look up the "Abandoned Farm." No one had heard of it. The postmistress knew no such place, no such "party," but pointed to a small mountain of mail matter directed to me there, and wished she knew how to get rid of it.

One interviewer, more persistent than

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the rest, did find a sister spinster of eighty-one summers with the same name but with no proclivities for agriculture. My dense ignorance was mortifying.

I wish also to add that "Gooseville" is my name for my special portion of Metcalf (for myself and three other geese), and has no pertinence whatever as applied to the other inhabitants, many of whom are my true friends, to whom I am strongly attached.

Metcalf is a station in Holliston, is on no map, has no telegraph office, and but one mail per day, which brings the letters of day before yesterday. The outgoing mail leaves at such an unconscionably early hour that we can only mail yesterday's letters day after to-morrow!

It sometimes happens, when surprised by a bevy of unexpected visitors who have come out "just for a lark and a light lunch, my dear"—which always means the expectation of a big country dinner, and I dash out and order a couple of chickens slain and scratch up an impromptu refection of those old stand-bys, sardines, deviled ham, Edam cheese, and

the ever-present pie, while said visitors in a starving condition are wondering at my enforced absence—that a messenger drives up with foaming steed and a bill for “special delivery,” announcing the intentions of the aforesaid visitors to drop in upon me. Sometimes as they are leaving the station they are requested, if going to Miss Sanborn’s, to kindly carry over a telegram, which proves to be their own!

An air of deep mystery hangs over the locality. “What is the name of that place where Kate has hid herself?” said a well-known New York artist to his wife. “She invited me to stop there on my way to Boston. Is it Lambsboro’, or Calfsville?”

Another distinguished friend, who has for a lifetime been identified with express interests and railroads, heard his wife say, one morning, “I’ve got a letter from Kate at her new home, and she’s quite near us now, at Metcalf, Mass.”

He repeated her last two words with thunderous scorn. “Metcalf, Mass.! Metcalf! There’s no such place. She’s made a mistake. Her writing is so bad you can’t make it out.”



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"But," she quietly persisted, "here is her envelope, my dear, clearly stamped "Metcalf, Mass." I don't suppose the postmaster has entered into any plot for deceiving us!"

"I tell you there is no such place! Don't I know every town, village, city, hamlet in all Massachusetts? Find it on the map, and I'll give you a handsome present. There's no such place."

The wife searched the atlas sadly. The husband took the train for town. As the conductor punched his ticket, Metcalf and its impossibility were still on his mind. A man always knows he's right, but likes to have it confirmed. "Look here! Is there such a town as Metcalf on this road?"

"No, sir."

"I thought so."

"But there is a stopping place with that name."

"Well, I am surprised. What's the population?"

"Population!" and he burst out laughing; "there ain't any!"

"What is there, then?"

"Oh, three houses and four cows," and he hurried on.

He next went into the baggage car and consulted the expressman.

"Do you know a lady by the name of Sanborn that has taken a house in Metcalf?"

"Yes, I guess so. There's a stout, buxom, red-headed woman with hair all a-flying. I see her coming down the road 'most every day to meet some one, or get a package, and I believe they do say her name's Sanborn."

Yes, we do have a local habitation and a name, and are rapidly growing. In fact, my optimistic eye discerns a coming boom in real estate. Three unoccupied farms have recently been purchased and greatly improved; a flagstaff has been raised in front of the depot; a new guide-post announces in large letters the exact distance of Providence and Boston from Metcalf; one man thinks of painting his house yellow, in the spring, if the financial stringency lets up. Two famous authors, fascinated by my happy life, have consulted me about a permanent residence here;

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one, a woman afflicted with insomnia, who wanted me, as "woman for woman," to silence my entire menagerie from sundown until 10 A. M. ; the other, a novelist, who has written of inexpensive homes he found across the ocean, and hoped he could secure a place like mine. As the old granny remarked when the cars first passed through her village, built upon an inland hill, "Well, it will be a seaport afore we know it!"

I think in time Metcalf will attain a mature dignity of nomenclature and be dubbed Metcow. Before that, I must take a trip to Russia for the purpose of utilizing a proposed title, "From Metcalf to Moscow."

A friend who often visits me, and looks upon my life here as an unfailing source of merriment, dates letters from "Met-cow," "Metheifer," "Met-bull-calf-but-managed-to-get-over-fence," or "Had-the-pleasure-of-meeting-bull." Such letters are described as "Metbulletins."

To return to my good friend, for whom I want to "express" the truest regard. I can not withhold from those who have

had the strength to follow me thus far one or two of his excellent stories, though I can not do him justice. And, first, the inimitable way in which he commented upon my enthusiastic praise of his beautiful country seat as I sat on the broad veranda, with its background of choice flowers and a charming perspective of velvety lawn, fine trees, parterres of brilliant blossoms and variegated colors, and the lazy Charles River meandering through a densely wooded park. He seemed weary, and I was not speaking to him, but he was listening as I said in my gushing way: "Oh, this is a paradise! How I would like to come here and sit down in a corner, be invisible, and not say one word—just revel in the view!"

"That's just the kind of visit I'd like to have you make," he responded.

Of all his good stories I like this one best:

He says that at school, one winter, the teacher, a better specimen than they usually had, fine looking and thoroughly educated, had little mercy for the stupid scholars, and was especially tried by an

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overgrown .lummux, who was bright enough in some studies but hopelessly deficient in mathematics. He also stuttered a little, and made the usual wry faces in trying to get his words out.

One day, when Mr. Duncan was disgusted by his failure to do a simple sum in subtraction, he rubbed out the figures on his slate and put down six ciphers, and six more underneath these, drew a line, and handing back the slate to the dullard, said gruffly, "There! see if you can subtract that."

The poor boy gazed stolidly at this new sum. It looked queer and hard:

oooooo  
oooooo  
———

He at last tackles it in this way, slowly stumbling along, making hideous grimaces as he progressed:

"Nawthin *from* nawthin leaves—nawthin. Nawthin from *nawthin*—leaves—nawthin. Nawthin from—nawthin—leaves nawthin. Nawthin from nawthin *leaves*—nawthin. Nawthin from nawthin leaves——*nawthin*."

Then he paused confused, but rallying all his brain power and making the worst face of all, exclaimed: "Gad, if I'm ever goin' to carry I've got to carry *now*! Nawthin — from — nawthin — leaves??! *one!*"

One other example of my absolute adherence to facts I would like to give before going further.

Last summer a dear friend, just returned from a gay resort, was kind enough to give me a few days. We were sitting in the quietest way. Her only boy was at play somewhere. I was reading aloud.

The silence was so intense it could almost be heard. It did seem dull to her, no doubt, and in the middle of a sentence she interrupted me, saying: "Kate, I do try to believe what you say, but you know you made up what you said about something always happening here, and a continual state of excitement. It's as quiet as the—— Hark! oh, horrors, what is it?" She screamed, as a tremendous crash and the rattle of broken glass came in emphatic rebuttal of her unbelief. "Heavens! has the side of the house

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fallen in, or is it an earthquake? And oh, where is Karl, my precious Karl? He may be killed now! I was half afraid to bring him anyway."

I was equally surprised. What could have made all that noise?

We two listened with bated breath for more. At last we heard hurrying steps and excited voices. The help were roused to action. But what was it? House examined from top to bottom. No plaster had fallen; nothing had caved in; house was intact; barn scaffold as strong as ever; hen house all right there. Karl was found safe and sound down by the lakelet floating a tiny skiff for the dogs to bring in. The sun shone serenely. There had evidently been no earthquake. Was it a day-nightmare?

At last some one thought of the cellar, and we ventured down. All seemed normal even there, but we opened the door of the small room, and there it was! The ropes, too long tested by the big swing cupboard, had given way, letting down three long shelves laden with preserves in all sorts of delicious permutations.

Jams, jellies, and pickles, down they dashed on to a rickety old table also loaded with goodies. All, all had gone down in a general collapse.

From the advent of the early pie plant to the ripening of the brilliant but astringent barberry, which combined with pears makes a relishing *compote*, I had toiled first to gather and then to pick over and prepare, and then stand over a hot stove, waiting for the concoction to "jell" or to boil up, and now all was gone!

That dreadful mess represented hours of toil and at least a barrel of sugar, and the hopes that perished there. For my guests depend upon finding lots of "sass" on the table as well as coming from my own lips.

A wheelbarrow and a couple of shovels were lumbered down and up the cellar stairs several times to cart off the sickening *débris*. It was used to fill up an old well, refuting the truth of the familiar proverb, "All's well that ends well." But one can find fault with many of our oft-quoted proverbs.

As we sat down and resumed our read-



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ing my friend again interrupted me, and remarked humbly, "Well, I'll never again doubt one word you say—at least when I am here, and unless my loved ones are at a safe distance from these impending dangers!"

Those desiring her name as a reliable witness will please address me (with stamp inclosed).

Apropos of earthquakes and "nothing happening" I will tell you of my first experience with a big-sized "seismic disturbance" in San Diego.

We had dawdled stupidly for weeks on the Sun Porch of the "Florence," walked about the sleepy town more than half asleep ourselves, driven all about to see the same peaceful views, beautiful but monotonous; miles and miles of orange orchards, masses of flowers and eternal sunshine; and as I came in from such an excursion I said (confidentially, of course, to another invalid): "This is a good place to be in, a poor place to do in. There is nothing going on, never the least ripple of excitement; nothing ever happens to stir the blood or make one

think; it's just one perpetual calm—a dead calm—and I do not want a person or a place to be so invariably placid.”

There was a little hop, but less hope, in the parlors that evening. What could a dozen pretty girls hope for, with only a few beardless boys to dance with, and a languid, *blasé* lieutenant who took them out on the floor as a philanthropic duty? I went up to bed, moralized a little about growing old gracefully, not remaining down-stairs as one of the juvenile antiques, and at last took up a tract on theosophy given me that morning by a full-fledged positive convert, who never had been on solid ground before in matters of religion and faith. I could not understand much of it. There's a lot of rubbish and rot about a good many theories. When writers lack clear ideas themselves they always confuse the readers with big, incomprehensible terms and technicalities that mean nothing when sifted down to hard pan. It is so in metaphysics, religion, and literature, in my modest opinion.

I had just reached the chapter on “Karma,” the unerring swing of the great

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moral pendulum started by God himself, that never fails to strike the guilty one with just the fair degree of force, or, as I once heard a plain woman define the same fact, "We all on us gits our come-up-ance!"

I was dozing off, when all at once my bed swayed as if it were on shipboard in an equinoctial. What was it? Music ceased; feet changed from a gallop to a run. There were shrieks and sobs and loud cries.

Surely my time had come.

Was it Karma?

I wished it had been!

Tumbling some way from my couch in a seasick condition, I crawled on hands and knees to the closet—the very worst place to be in. One should stand in a doorway. But we are not mostly Samsons, and the house shakes us, instead of our "bringing down the house."

I didn't know that then; I didn't know much of anything. At last, getting on some sort of covering, I crawled down the stairs to see strong men sick from fear.

Yes, it was a quake—a tremor of one

minute and twenty seconds' duration; and I didn't like it any more than I was pleased with the catastrophe in my cellar. My unpropitious advent into the realm of theosophic cloudland did not put me on "solid ground," and I have never dabbled with it since.

As the unregenerate old woman said to a clerical friend of mine when he urged her to give at least the last days of her life to the Lord: "Well," said she, "I've no doubt religion is a good thing, but I've got along so far now I guess I won't putter with it."

My Hindoo friend assured me that he had never encountered a "Mahatma" in the mountains nor the valleys, and that he heard more of theosophy in this country than in his own land.

In this book I intend to be utterly natural and helter-skelter. Please, now, understand that two hours are elapsing.

I've just come in from shoveling a path through the drifted snow to the big barn door.

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Such fun, such exercise, I've not had for years—something like the old New Hampshire winters, when I would occasionally rise at dawn and steal out with my sled for a coast down "River Hill." I labored so earnestly that I threw all the snow across to the neat path which had just been made to the woodhouse, so did not receive quite the praise I had looked for. Then Maxidar I, Rhadamanthus, Snapper, and I plunged through the untrodden deeps into the road and waded along for some distance.

It was grand! The only way to enjoy snow is not to fear or dislike it, but rush out, dash about, and get up as glorious a glow and tingle as ever one feels in the briny surf.

I believe pneumonia, *la grippe*, and kindred horrors are caused by overheated rooms, lack of fresh air and exercise, overloaded stomachs, and an artificial, nervous, hurried way of living. My present manager of farm affairs, a burly Nova Scotian, a fine model of vigorous manhood, tells me he never heard of these diseases till he came to this country. His

mother, now over eighty, and the mother of eleven children, never was ill in her life. He has often seen her in "sugar season" working hard all day in the woods, soaked to the skin, and then turn in to sleep on boughs, with an old quilt over her, drying her clothes by the waning fire of the open-mouthed camp as she slept soundly. Outdoors, M. D., is my physician.

Do try my doctor! No nauseous doses, no dangerous drugs, no big bills for small pills, infinitesimal triturations of highest power. Nothing to do but to go outdoors and stay out, taking as much exercise as your strength will allow, and call every day on the cows and horses, pet them, feed them, get interested in them, and soon you will be well.

I could cite more wonderful cures from this simple prescription than you see boasted of in every paper in the land. I know a young man who, threatened with sudden and inherited consumption, was advised to give up all study, go to Morristown, N. J., buy a horse, groom it, feed it, ride it, and keep outdoors. Two years

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after he took a prize for a standing high jump in college athletics, and stood high in his class as a student. One great secret of the frequent cures in California is the unconscious patronizing of Outdoors, M. D. Half the middle-aged people of our country are slowly committing suicide from either too much or too little work, eating too much and exercising too little. I am often unpleasantly reminded of the aged, short-breathed, over-corpulent pet pug, as I meet these indolent, overfed men and women, who can not go up two flights of stairs without painful panting for lack of breath, to whom running would be an impossibility.

If you can not bring yourself to care for animals, the next best thing is to study Nature. We know some charming authors who go to her school every day. One great source of health and freshness for Wordsworth was the out-of-door life led by that poet.

"I should like to see your master's study," said a reverent visitor. "Is this it?" pointing to the loaded book shelves. "No, sir," said the servant, "this is my

master's library ; his study is out of doors." And Thoreau and Burroughs and Jeffries and Abbott and Olive Thorne Miller and Ellwanger have shown us how much one can see close at home by careful observation. Ruskin greatly exalts this habit, saying: "The more I think of it, the more I find this conclusion impressed upon me, that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something and tell what it saw in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see."

Yes, say with Macbeth :

Throw physic to the dogs ; I'll none of it.

I literally cure my dogs with the popular patent medicines. "Snapper," threatened with red mange from high living and too many lumps of sugar, was restored to health by sulphur and sarsaparilla. Maxidar, ditto. Ebenezer, a handsome double-pawed cat (named for my great-grandfather, and, like him, a good fighter), was undoubtedly saved from an untimely death by Castoria. I notice that hens are now



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treated with homœopathic remedies. One unlucky hen woman queries thus in *The Poultry Journal*: "Will you please tell me what is the trouble with my little chicks? They can not use their legs." Answer: "Give *calcarea silicata* 6 in drinking water." What a magic and universal power there is in advertising!

The last person in the world to be influenced by such blazing self-praise confessed to me that when friends constantly remarked on her pallor, she thought for one moment in a strange, wild, last-hope sort of way of "Pink Pills for Pale People," promising preservation of perennial pulchritude. We are none of us invulnerable, but I believe "Outdoor, M. D.," to be the best physician of them all!

How I am rattling on! But why aspire to formal elegance of diction? My best friends say: "O Kate, if you would only let yourself out, and write as you talk, you would make a hit. Just dash along and be natural, forgetting your audience." It is true that the nib of a steel pen is apt to stiffen my thought-flow, but this chapter

is, as the title indicates, just as I talk. Like Rousseau's receipt for a love letter : "Begin without knowing what you are going to say, and leave off without knowing what you have said."

## CHAPTER III.

### BYGONES.

Why can not some web be woven fit for lifelong wear, so that memory may be allowed to crystallize about it, and then the mantles of those we have loved could literally fall upon us?

E. H. ROLLINS.

WHAT sharp contrasts occur in the simplest life! Day before yesterday, at the Authors' Reading, listening with reverence and delight to Mrs. Howe, Mr. Higginson, and a brilliant circle of celebrities; to-day plowing through two feet of snow, with only dogs for companions. This alternation of urban privileges and rural delights makes a perfect combination.

In my young days Boston to me meant all that was best in life. College professors in a fresh-water college had but starvation salaries. How did they manage to live comfortably on fifteen hundred

dollars a year, entertaining willingly and generously the anxious parent of wild students, ministers who exchanged, agents for various societies, commencement orators, stray missionaries, give class parties, supply themselves with needed books, educate their families? One of the trustees had but three hundred dollars per year as a pastor; yet he lived well, kept horse and cow, and educated three children. Of course, they could not afford to travel much.

I remember one professor saying of an associate instructor: "John needs to travel to rub off sharp corners and broaden his views. If he could only get to White River Junction, or possibly as far as Thetford, it would be an immense advantage." But those same professors, overworked, underpaid, restricted by narrow incomes and narrower codes of life, were scholars and heroes, and knew how to make men out of the rough, gawky material sent from the even poorer families in New Hampshire and Vermont.

It has been the poor boys that have been heard from. Dartmouth does not

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send forth rationalistic dudes or professional sluggers, with a special bow and gait and big canes and swelled heads, but men, to do grand work in the world.

I never go anywhere, no matter how far away, that I do not find, among the foremost citizens, Dartmouth graduates to be proud of. "It is a small college, but there are those who love it."

Time's whirligig brings wondrous changes and improvements. Students were forbidden to play cards, so the enjoyable games of whist or euchre or cribbage were also forbidden in the homes of the faculty. But the boys played all the same on the sly. Once the inspector, with another teacher, entered a room suddenly where a quiet game was progressing. Lights went out as suddenly as the door had opened; there was a shuffling and a scuffling, and all was still. The culprits were dragged forth from various retreats. A negro had hidden under the bed. "He need not have done that," said the witty Greek professor; "he had only to keep dark!"

We girls were not allowed to learn to

dance. Even the simplest square dance was out of the question. But the boys danced by themselves, with handkerchiefs on their arms to designate fair partners, and once in a while drove down to the "Junc" to indulge in rowdy Terpsichorean exertions with a doubtful set of partners.

The theater was almost the gate of hell.

I remember a question solemnly propounded to my class in Sunday school by a professor, afterward a member of Congress:

"Can a Unitarian possibly be saved?" We were to think over it conscientiously and carefully during the week.

Billiards was only played secretly and in fear of discovery, in back rooms smelling of cheap drinks.

A courageous woman who cooked in the house next to ours let her pretty daughter, Frances, go to a dancing-school. "For," she said, "I don't want to bring her up in a superstitious tragedy." People laughed at her remark, but I think she had the right of it. Now I open the

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Dartmouth and read of private theatricals, dancing and card parties. Commencement balls are matronized by professors' wives. The professors themselves play lawn tennis and whist, and I believe the average of morality is higher than when all amusement was suppressed, and considered wicked.

My life was pretty tame; entertaining returned missionaries was not to my taste. The especial Western brother that I recall with detestation was a home missionary from Oregon, who had come back for funds and a second wife to assist him in his arduous labors.

He came to spend one night, but remained four days.

Of course our one servant had been called to nurse a sick brother, and I had to rattle round in her place. What an appetite that man was blessed with, and how interminably he did talk and talk, keeping all at table when I longed to be clearing up and get outdoors! The day he did go he gave us a drive. I sat by him, and these were his pleasing remarks:

"You have one sister, I believe?"

"Yes."

"She is happily married, I hear."

"Yes."

"She, I am told, is very good-looking—quite a beauty!"

"Yes," again.

"They say *she* hasn't got red hair."

Once in a great while, when fairly starved for a little uplift and recreation, I was allowed to go down to Boston for a few days to see famous pictures there on exhibition, hear an organ concert, go to the theater, hear Dickens read, see Charlotte Cushman or Booth, do a very little shopping, stare like a hungry child on Christmas eve at shop windows, browse in bookstores and the Public Library, and—best and most prized of all pleasure—see dear Mr. Fields for a few moments. He would greet me so cordially, tell me a story, give me some new books to notice, and I would go home with enough joy to live on for three months.

I have never felt that enough has been said about Mr. Fields as a generous helper of young people and young authors and struggling teachers and poverty-



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struck colleges. It was a constant and cheerful habit with him to give, give, give to all who needed his assistance—a lecture here, an encouraging letter there, a reassuring hand-grasp, a greeting smile of welcome.

De Quincey's widely scattered essays were hunted up and collected by his loving hand. He made Dickens and Thackeray feel at home in Boston. His lectures, given freely to classes of students, did incalculable good; his own essays are delightful reading; his verses are graceful and genuine. As a friend he will ever stand pre-eminent. I revere and bless his memory. If it was a treat to a callow scribbler to see Mr. Fields in his sanctum or in his ideal home, it was even more to be allowed to have him as an honored guest for several days and several times in our own home "Under the Elms."

The students to whom he gave these lectures fairly adored him. On the memorable occasion of his first visit to us I, for the only time in my life, was too excited and delighted to think of food, fas-

cinated by the charm of his conversation. I did feel the pangs of hunger after omitting supper and breakfast, and had to seek in the pantry for a cold drumstick and a glass of milk after his departure. Every story he told on that first visit is stamped indelibly on my mind. I have never seen them in print, and they deserve resurrection.

He said: "We decided to go to some quiet spot in New Hampshire. I needed rest. I desired to get away from talk, from authors with manuscripts under their arms, from the *Atlantic Monthly* and any one who could say anything about it. We chose Camptown as just the place, and drove up to a very pretty cottage, with the neatest surroundings, and inquired for board and room for two. The woman herself opened the door just a little way and looked out. 'Can't you take us? We would like to stay with you a week.' 'Guess not. I've got tired of these city boarders. They want everything for nothing, and women are dreadful fussy.' But at length she relented, and said: 'Well, I like your appearance

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and I'll take you ; but you must do your own stretching,' " meaning, as was afterward discovered, that they were expected to wait upon themselves at table.

He started out after breakfast the first morning for a long tramp, and as he went out of the yard he congratulated himself that he was at last away from all annoyance incident to his life as editor of the Atlantic Monthly. Probably nobody here ever heard of such a thing. And he strode on, light-hearted and at ease. As he descended the first hill he saw a curious figure hastening down the opposite incline. He was tall and shamblly in gait, wore a beflowered old dressing-gown and a rusty beaver, and as he approached he began this salutation :

" Is this Mr. Fields ? "

" Yes, sir. "

" Mr. Fields who is editor of the Atlantic Monthly ? "

" Yes, yes, " and he tried to get on. But, oh, no !

The object said : " Good morning, Mr. Fields. I have come thus early, intending to call and see if you would not provide

the Atlantic Monthly for one year gratis to an indigent clergyman?"

On his return from the walk his host congratulated him. "You are quite a pedestinarian," and called his attention to some chairs on the porch. "Do you like these chairs?"

"Why, yes, they are just the thing."

"Well, I think myself that they are pretty good for piazzery purposes."

He pretended that he went into the drug store and inquired of the clerk, who was presumably rather simple-minded, "What do you consider the most popular pill now?"

But said clerk was not so artless as he looked, and he replied promptly: "Wall, I have an uncle who has traveled a lot—been to Europe, Asia, Indy, and Californy; and he gives the preference to Schenck's. He says that all the craowned heads are a-takin' of 'em!"

He told me of a chore boy adopted in this family whose name was Henry Ward Beecher Fogg, who was more lazy than devout, but used his religion as a cloak to hide his sins from his trusting parents.

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He would suggest, on a hot day when weary of haying, that they should sing before nooning, "Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing," and go home to meditate. When the good woman listened at his door and distinctly heard him snoring instead of praying, her confidence waned.

His stories about lecturing were excellent. Several of Boston's beacon lights were discussing their remunerations for lectures as novitiates, and Dr. Holmes capped the climax by saying that he once lectured for five dollars. But as he was coming down from the pulpit a deacon met him, and said, "This lecture wasn't just what we was lookin' for, and I guess that tew-fifty will be abaout right."

How quaint his tale of Whittier, when he spent a night at Amesbury and was just sinking into his first sleep, stealing in at night to tuck up his feet against the cold, as his mother used to do! And of the Frenchman who, coming to Boston, went out to Cambridge to call on Longfellow, offering as his reason for the visit, "Sare, I hear you ave no ruins in dis countree, so I ave come to see you."

Mr. Fields never hesitated to tell a story about himself ; as when he was going out to his seaside home at Manchester, Mass., and overheard two men just in front, talking in this way :

"They say that Fields the publisher's got a house up there on Thunderbolt Hill."

"Yes, that's his house, right up there."

"He's a lecturing a little too, now, ain't he ? "

"Yes, he's going round all the time."

"Well, how is he, anyway ? "

"Well, he ain't Gough, by a —— sight."

And the man who didn't seem pleased by his personal appearance or manner, who presented himself with the usual bundle of manuscripts at his office door :

"Good morning, sir," he said. "Is this Mr. Fields ? "

"Yes, sir, I am Mr. Fields."

"Mr. James T. Fields ? "

"Yes, that is my name."

"I mean a member of the firm of Ticknor & Fields."

"I am that person."

"Well, then, I'd like to see Mr. Ticknor."

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That's all I can spare space for now on that delightful theme.

Mr. Higginson alluded to a letter from Mr. Fields which procured him "A Morning with Tennyson," and his words brought back old memories.

I can't quite go back to quiltings, spinning bees, "singing meetings," and spelling matches, or to the shoemakers who went from house to house with bench and lapstone, making a supply of shoes for the whole family, nor to the invaluable tailoress who carried her goose and press-board, but I distinctly do recall the dress-maker, who came to us with big shears (I can still feel them clipping round my neck) and brass thimble without a top, who made our dresses for twenty-five cents a day; and considering the creations evolved, I think she was too well paid. Money was precious and scarce, but I knew nothing of the miserly scrimping and meanness that are often allied to close economy. I was told, the other day, of a deacon's wife of a former generation who lay awake a whole night praying that her husband might give her twenty-

five cents to pay her "quarterage" for the missionary collection, and that he might give it willingly. A lady born in 1801 says:

"The early inculcation of *saving* formed a lifelong habit, and was sometimes carried to a ridiculous extent; as when an aged minister stopped on the steps of his church of a Sunday morning, and, pointing with his cane, said, 'There is a pin'; or when a portly gentleman, walking with a lady, stooped, and picking up an old brass button placed it carefully on the top of a post. 'I know it is of no use,' he said, 'but I could not pass it by. Saving has been my habit from childhood.' There was no waste of a crumb or scrap that could help feed an animal or be made into soap or paper. Paper was used with especial care. My mother would as soon have taken her handkerchief as a paper to kindle a fire. When the fire went out, if there was not a tinder-box in the house a flint was used to get a spark, or a lantern was taken to a neighbor to have the candle lighted, or a skillet to bring home a coal of fire."



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Nor did I see aught but the rosy side of farm life in my girlhood. The farmers who came to our door with their produce to sell were our friends and benefactors, well-to-do, "forehanded," and "good providers" for their own families. Two of these I remember with real affection. The first was Uncle Daniel Farnum—tall, lank, lean-favored, with a twinkling eye and a ready smile. He called potatoes "short sass"; carrots, beets, etc., "long sass"; and spoke of steaks and chops as "low meats" in distinction from roasts. In his bounteous hospitality he was always urging us to "come over" in sugaring-off time, cherry time, plum time, hulled-corn time, beechnut time, molasses-candy time, etc.—a calendar of goodies for the entire year. He inclined to an alphabetical arrangement of his family, and at table he would say in his hearty way, "Hannah A., pass the butter; Noah B., run down cellar and draw a little cider; Emma C., help Kate to cottage cheese made to hum; Polly D., you tend to that pie." He became at last a little crazed by the Millerite doctrine, and, pru-

dently willing his property to his wife, he prepared to go up. Alcott used to say, "Each one may decide when he will ascend," and dear Uncle Daniel had that conviction in a literal fashion. One evening he donned his white robe of departure—his "going-away gown"—and mounted to the ridge-pole, but receiving no supernal summons nor assistance, returned to his anxious family to await orders.

The second stand-by was white-haired, rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed Father Newton, a veritable Cheeryble brother, who came twice a week with goodies, and whom I often visited. Oh, the delights of taking tea there, and the sense of repletion that followed! Oh, those big raised biscuits, the three kinds of sauce, four or five varieties of cake, and always pie in astounding variety!—and why not pie when one can get such pies? Beecher knew what he was talking about when he said: "Apple pie should be eaten while it is yet florescent, white or creamy yellow, with the merest drip of candied juice along the edges; of a mild and modest warmth; the

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sugar suggesting jelly, yet not jellied; the morsels of apple neither dissolved nor yet in original substance, but hanging, as it were, in a trance between the spirit and the flesh of applehood."

And Dr. Holmes says: "There is a very odd prejudice against pie as an article of diet. It is common to hear every form of bodily degeneracy attributed to this particular favorite food. I see no reason or sense in it. Mr. Emerson believed in pie, and was almost indignant when a fellow-traveler refused the slice he offered him. 'Why, Mr. —,' he said, 'what is pie made for? If every Green Mountain boy has not eaten a thousand times his weight in apple, pumpkin, squash, and mince pie, call me a dumpling. And Colonel Ethan Allen was one of them—Ethan Allen, who, as they used to say, could wrench off the head of a wrought nail with his teeth.'"

And do you understand me when I allude to a "pan-dowdy" and a "brown Betty"? If not, I condole with you. I would walk ten miles to-night to get again the robust welcome, the exuberant

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happiness, the old fashioned sincerity, not omitting the well-spread table, of those old-time visits. It has been the lasting remembrance of such delights that made me aspire to a farm and a country home; and my highest ambition socially is to make my dear friends as happy round my table as I used to be when a guest at "Jericho."

## CHAPTER IV.

### HELP !

No suitable quotation exists for this theme.

I SAID that when we were afflicted with the missionary our cook had gone to care for a sick brother. When she returned she told us he was "dead and in his grave," but announced it in such a jubilant mood that we wondered. "It was good he went as he did; he was gittin' awful helpless. Fust off he had paralyssis, and then pewmony set in. The Masons come and took care of him, slick as ever you see, and I tell you they buried him right up to the handle." The display and paraphernalia of the Masonic rites had obliterated her natural grief.

She it was who came out and stood at the front gate one exquisite summer evening in July. So peaceful, so dreamy, so serene, yet I could discern a happy undertone of insect language and soft twit-

tering of sleepy birds, and I said: "How still and quiet! yet, if you listen, you can hear various sounds."

"Yes, mum, there's 'most allers something a-squeekin' in natur."

She left us to marry a brother Mason in the fall. I think they met at the funeral; and when I wrote that I would like to know how she was getting on, and hoped she had found a good husband, she replied, "I got a pretty good husband, I suppose, as men run."

I could quote all day the sayings of my various assistants in my early home; as the very grand young lady who came to honor us with her presence for a few weeks, but left suddenly with the explanation that "there was no future in cooking."

But it is on my sorrows here with my hired men that I desire to dwell. Several have professed such devotion to me that they could remain forever; but in each instance cider—hard old cider—has deprived me of their valuable society. My farm has proved to be a temporary retreat for nonreformed inebriates, all of

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whom came with glorious testimonials of character from reliable and religious people, none of which alluded to the fatal habit. There are more lies told in these letters of recommendation—negative, silent lies—than in the advertisements offering a house or horse for sale; and that is putting it strong.

I have had ample opportunity to study intoxication in its various phases. Martin Dubois, my first, used to get red-faced and audaciously complimentary after he had imbibed too freely.

"You are a most beautiful lady!" he once exclaimed as he tottered in and fell heavily over a clothes-horse and back against the kitchen door. "You're a perfect lady, so you are!"

He was an extreme egotist, and always desired to speak of himself, his sea adventures, his agricultural success, whoever my guests might be. Once I was walking over the farm with two distinguished men, one prominent in philanthropy, the other a rabid politician of opposite views. Both were talking, each on his own theme; but Martin would attempt to drown both

voices by tales of his achievements with my oats or cabbages. They would nod abstractedly and return each to his "mouton." At last Martin insisted on displaying his withered arm. He had fallen from a masthead and injured said arm. It was useless from the elbow, unpleasantly flabby. It would turn easily every which way, and really was his pride. He was sternly rebuked, and commanded never to do so again; but this pathological spectacle was still exhibited in a more furtive way whenever a stray guest could be momentarily impaled.

He was always talking about burglars, and men he caught just climbing into the dining-room window, and tramps he routed at midnight from the haymow, and mysterious characters lounging round the depot, until I got so nervous and scary that life was a burden.

One dark night, after waiting awake for several hours to hear somebody, I did certainly hear a step down-stairs. Probably that burglar had got in this time. After listening in that breathless way which stands one's hair straight up and



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protrudes the eyes, I stole stealthily down and just escaped death at the hands of my protector himself, who, armed with a big club like a policeman's billy, was hiding behind the kitchen door ready to swing it at any intruder. I just shied past him and ran up to my room, deciding that my worst foes were those of my own household. He was a wild-looking Indian object at all times, suggesting a cross between a Canuck and an Apache. But when he went out on rainy days to cut rhubarb for the innocuous pie, skulking through the shrubbery, an old red blanket on his shoulders, bareheaded, and armed with a huge carving knife, I was truly in terror lest he might be seized with a sudden frenzy and slay us all, for he did have such bad "spells" of temper. At haying time he got so ugly that, inflamed by more drink than usual, he quarreled without reason with a quiet hand who had come to help, and jammed him against the side of the barn. Hearing loud altercation, I ran out and joined in the fray to rescue the small-sized man, who was not overstrong, from old wounds

in the war. It was a thrilling occasion, my first and last free fight. I could not stand it to have a man killed right before my eyes—a man working for me, too. The matter had been so hastily arranged that the usual preliminaries were omitted, such as the calling out of the militia, the skillful working up of popular interest by obtaining one kind of injunction from a lower court, to be counteracted by another kind of injunction from a higher court. There was not even a referee, no seconds, no bottle-holder—barring one of the combatants—no reporters, no audience, not even a vidience.

I had to assume all these important functions, and at once; without, moreover, the usual training for the fist, years of constant practice with the mouth, and appearance as a star in any theater. I also found it necessary to be one of the principals; in fact, the principal principal as a matter of principle.

So, dashing in as they clinched, I landed on the neck of my hired man(iac), and, pulling him off, gave him an "upper cut," and a cut, too, "on the bias," across his

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left eye, and retired, tired but triumphant, and proud of my muscle.

The martyred victim declared, with white lips and trembling tones, that he wasn't at all alarmed; but I was, and angry, too; and when he went off to consult a constable and get the law of the "bloody Indian," I sincerely hoped my ferocious Martin would be sent to the lockup for a night at least. But nothing ever came in retribution, and my friends implored me to dismiss him; so he retired from my household soon after.

Haying is a terrible ordeal. There's real poetry about emerald-tinted, dewy grass, and the wave of growing grain, and the tall and blithely nodding oats, and stalwart, bronzed haymakers, and merry, sun-kissed maidens in broad-brimmed hats. But the real man in actual, prosaic haying time is like a woman on washing day—so outrageously and unreasonably cross and irascible that the very dogs dart outdoor with tails between their legs.

Then, hayers are always so "dry." They bring, of course, cider by the gallon, but continually demand lemonade

and ice-water, with strong hints for something more potent. I have seen harvesting done in the West with twenty-eight horses and a magnificent apparatus, with three men to guide the machinery, delivering the grain, tied up in strong bags, at each corner of the immense field. This is grand; but country haying is simply a horror!

My second superintendent, when mildly boozy, was funny enough. He came one evening to my sitting-room door and knocked in a way that meant important and pressing business and immediate action. I looked up from my letter-writing a little annoyed at the untimely interruption.

"'Scuse me, miss," he said, doffing his old cap with a Chesterfieldian bow, "but we've got to settle it to-night."

"Settle what, Jerry?"

"Why, about that gosling or goose, as she or he has grown to be. It won't do, ma'am, to let the old goose do any more settin'. I'll bet she's a hundred now, and that the gander's her own brother. It don't amount to nothing. Now, for the

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life of me"—and he reeled a trifle, but recovered himself with dignity—"I can't decide whether the only gosling we got out of thirteen eggs and two months' steady setting (the gander taking his turn at it full half the time) is a he or a she. Sometimes I think she's a she, and then I mistrust she's a he; and again I believe it's a she, after all is said and done. Now"—and again his center of gravity seemed as uncertain as the problem presented—"you see how it is; if it is a she, well, then we had better get a he; and if it turns out a he, why, we'll have to buy a she, and we've got to settle it to-night."

By this time his eye glittered, his face was flushed, his tones loud. I told him I always made it a practice, which I never broke over, to sleep before settling any serious question, and I must do so now, even in this crisis. The mind, I continued, often works out things for itself in just the best way. "You go to bed now, and in the morning we shall both be better able to decide."

As I went up-stairs after the impressive interview, the old clock on the landing

struck twelve, and the matter was not settled.

I thought of a story I read long ago, showing how much could be expressed and explained by the use of one pronoun. A Lancashire witness was explaining a fight. "He'd a stick, and he'd a stick, and he hit he, and he he. And if he had hit he harder than he hit he he'd a killed he, and not he he." Who can help adding he-he-he! in a laugh?

When Jerry was himself, no one could be more civil, kind, and satisfactory. He was so tall, well made, and good-looking that I was proud of him as a coachman, and have always missed him.

But drink changed him to a demon; then he grew white and desperate. And when the climax came, and he hurled a hatchet at the head of his patient, gentle, loving wife, making a dangerous cut, and dashed the brimming milk-pail through the kitchen window, I felt it was time to part.

But parting was a prolonged agony. Five miserable days were devoted to animated but unavailing efforts to induce

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him to sever his associations with Gooseville. Forbidden the house, he would stand under a spreading maple across the way, looking dangerously sulky, and at night would steal back to hold pathetic interviews with his patient wife, who replied in hoarse, sobbing whispers from her second-story window, all of which sounded full of dire possibilities to me, listening in that intense way in which a thoroughly frightened woman does listen after midnight, and no moon. He, too, regarded me as a mother, and could not go away without a last interview. I spent most of the time with kind neighbors; went away on the fourth day for a five-mile tramp, only to see Jerry slouching around in the same old fashion as I wearily turned the last corner for home.

To add to my unhappy plight during this protracted launching of poor Jerry into the "wide, wide world," two friends came, as three of old once came, to comfort and advise. But, unlike Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite, they didn't sit down for seven days in considerate silence, but began to speak at once.

One said : " I don't want to alarm you, but that man is a reckless character when intoxicated, and it isn't safe for you to be here nights without a guard. He said, down town, that you would live to regret turning him off. What you need is a constable here every night till he goes away. It will cost a good deal, but he might set fire to the barn, or get into the house drunk and kill somebody. He knows every door and window; you couldn't keep him out," The companion was a constable and ready to be engaged at once, but that I did not then know, and I probably looked pale and nervous. Constable, next *loquiter* :

"There's another thing you ought to do right away, and that is, to get a bulldog to protect your premises. It would cost something, of course, but my friend here has got just the animal you want. Why, the other day he jumped right through a window after a bad-looking tramp. Door was locked and family away, and he was bound to get out and do his duty."

"But I have two fine watch-dogs," I



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said, "and don't want to buy another, and such a fierce one as you describe."

"Yes," said the owner of the dog, "I know that; but then, you see, they know Jerry and would let him go right by, and wag their tails all right, if he was a-breakin' in. Well, all is, I don't think you're safe as 'tis now. Jerry's fearful worked up. You can have the dog for twenty-five dollars—he's worth every cent of it—and then you'll feel easy. Nobody knows what such a man will do when he's drunk, and mad too."

Unable to make their schemes succeed—although I was trembling with fear—they left, shaking their heads solemnly and prophesying dire tragedies. The next day Jerry did depart with his long-suffering wife, who had declared that he might go alone and look out for himself.

After a series of tearful and demonstrative good-bys, she decided that there couldn't be a better fellow than Jerry, "when the liquor wasn't in him to possess him," and such a husband was better, after all, than no man at all. As the train

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disappeared, I sat down to moralize on the curse of intemperance, the inexplicable devotion of a much-abused wife, and the horror of crocodile sympathy.

## CHAPTER V.

### WOMEN AND GEESE.

Have a motto, but dare not give it.

"No Metcalf on map!"

Apologies are again in order. I make them gladly, gleefully, proudly, since such dense ignorance is bliss, procuring me a prize package—a most complete and conscientiously thorough atlas of the grand old State of Massachusetts, also a small pocket map, etc.

No Metcalf on any map? I deserve a dunce cap and bells, but never was good in "jografy," and had no State atlas to study.

On page 154 of my big atlas there is "Metcalf Station P. O." in clear, black letters, and "Chicken Brook" (how fortuitously appropriate that name for a hen woman!). My brook is meandering just like life over the page, actually a tributary of the Charles River.

I am sure that with the aid of a microscope I could actually discern the flag-staff, and my biggest henhouse, or "Kate's Hen Coop," as "On Shares" calls it.

And not only Metcalf, but every town, post office, railroad station, hill, pond, stream, shore name, or any other feature that has a name, no matter how insignificant.

Yes, I see "Crimpsville," "Peppercorn Hill," "Lily Pond," "Magomiscock Hill," etc., all down. I looked at "No. Foxborough" in a puzzled way (just one instant). I knew full well about Foxborough.

How few people will admit that they have made a mistake or are in the wrong! In fact, I can't recollect any single instance, bright and shining, but myself.

I like to admit a blunder and gain so much information and a fifteen-dollar atlas, with pocket map thrown in! I am willing, nay, eager, to make more blunders, and will apologize indefinitely and continuously, if others will come to the fore as nobly, as generously.

I do hereby and furthermore acknowl-

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edge that we women are most ignorant, inconsequent, illogical, incoherent imbeciles—at times. I determined to write on that theme—"Women as Imbeciles"—one day when in California sojourning at a popular "Health Retreat" on a mountain top, three miles from anywhere.

I had commenced scribbling one Friday afternoon and had related one absurd instance in rather a superior and far-above-all-such-nonsense sort of fashion, when the dinner-bell sounded. Wishing to be wisely careful, I took up my valuable little watch lying on the table, put it into the trunk tray, and closed the lid. At once I realized that on the watch chain were both trunk keys, and the lock was hopelessly closed.

I said 'twas "of a Friday." The whole establishment was run by Second Adventists, who kept Saturday most scrupulously for their Sabbath. No guests were received or taken down to depart. No work could be done. Then came our Sunday! Had to wait nearly three days before a locksmith could be secured and brought up the rocky road to my relief.

I lost interest in that article, and it remains unfinished, but the materials for such an essay gain upon me. I inquired of a wretched woman almost dead from dropsy, sojourning at the same retreat, what she thought had caused the disease. She sighed wearily, and replied: "I believe it was brought upon me by an immense bustle which I hired a neighbor to make for me when bustles were considered a necessity as well as the fashion. It was heavy and heating, tiring me terribly, and when at last I took it off my back was so sensitive I caught cold there, so my doctor says"; and this poor bloated victim of a section of a hair mattress leaned back to think of the tapping—probably the last—on the morrow. Another patient, a most interesting, cultivated woman, literally caught her death of cold by sitting for two hours in the aisle of a damp cathedral directly over a cold-air register during an organ-recital.

"And why didn't you move, or go out?" I inquired.

"Oh, the aisles were crowded, and the

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music was heavenly, and I thought I shouldn't mind the chill."

Needless suicide for two apparently sensible women. We say, "How silly! how wicked!" But just realize that almost all our sex are to-day suffering for pockets—nay, worse and more ridiculous, for "only" one pocket apiece—and go about with handkerchiefs stuck in belt (usually missing in time of need) and with portmonnaie in extended hand, as if in charitable consideration for the passing thief. We need not aspire to the masculine luxury of fourteen pockets, but it is imbecile that we do not insist on having one in each dress and in a convenient locality.

"Florence, your pocket is sticking out of the placket," I said to a friend as she was starting on a shopping expedition.

"Well, for mercy's sake, don't touch it; it's such a comfort to know where it is!"

A New York friend wrote in this way to me last summer:

"Dear Kate, I go to Boston to-morrow, and would like to see you and your unique home. Do you care enough for me to meet me at Boston and take me out for a

day to your farm? It will be quite a test of your friendship, nevertheless I shall look for you, dear. It must be lovely out there now. Till we meet, devotedly as ever."

She did not mention hour of starting nor intended route, nor even whether she was to come by rail or boat. This was a test, but I managed to reach her by telegram and secure a little definite information. After her visit, all too brief, I found she had left her umbrella in the rack, her sandals at the door, her tooth-wash on the stand, and her watch in the upper bureau drawer.

I can see that Howells is true to nature when he makes his women unreasoning, inconsequent, and often silly, but still fascinating and lovable—pleasing idiots! We grumble and rebel at his types, but the trouble is they are too realistic, too true to life. Being an imbecile myself, I feel more at ease with such. I once met a lady who remarked with supreme self-gratulation, "I never made a mistake in my life." That statement, in itself a gigantic mistake, prejudiced me unpleas-



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antly. I don't like women who think themselves perfect, making a foible of omniscience, as Sydney Smith said of Archbishop Whewell; and, in spite of their imbecility, I prefer to stay with the jolly majority, if they are geese.

Apropos of geese, I visited Hagenbeck's show the other day and saw geese going through a military drill. Must begin teaching mine at once. It will take time, but, as they often live to be one hundred and fifty years old, some one can carry on the good work after I am gone. I believe all living things can be marvelously trained by care and patience. One of my friends has a dozen pet frogs which he feeds with mice. He becomes deeply interested in the individual characteristics of his batrachian friends.

Back of his house is a small pond full of lily pads, grass-bordered, with a gravel path about it. Red goldfish gleam in the water. Here and there a turtle's head lies still on the surface. But *the* inhabitants and rulers of this province are the dozen or more bullfrogs that have lived there for six years past, and whose

whole bearing indicates that they own the pond and know they do.

They are simply monstrous—great, fat, unwieldy-looking creatures, but whoever thinks them as stupid as they look makes a great mistake. Three times a week, at five o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Jewell feeds them their favorite article of diet—live mice. Promptly by five o'clock on those afternoons the hungriest are up on the bank waiting for him to come to his regular seat by the path. When he rings a bell the rest of them come swimming along from all parts of the pond and climb up beside the vanguard; the gold-fish that also hear the call come swarming up to the shore, for they are to be fed too; and the blackbirds and robins, hearing the bell, know it means crackers for the fish, and that if they themselves are prompt about it they can get their share, and so they come flying to the pond too. It is a queer sight—the fish in the water, the birds in the air, and the frogs in one element or the other as they prefer.

Gilbert White made much of a tortoise,

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and Lord Erskine at one time kept two leeches as favorites. Being used when he was taken dangerously ill, he fancied that they saved his life. Every day he gave them fresh water, and felt sure that both knew him and were appreciative of his attentions. He named them Home and Cline, after two celebrated surgeons, and he affirmed that they differed decidedly in disposition. Robert Herrick had a pet pig which he fed daily with milk from a silver tankard. Harriet Martineau had the same odd pet which she had washed and scrubbed daily. When too ill to superintend the operation, she would listen at her window for piggy's squeals when the ablution commenced. Charles Kingsley was interested in all animals, and every creature living (barring the spider); toads and sandwasps were protected and cared for, and he even rejoiced in a favorite slow-worm, which his parishioners were especially enjoined not to kill.

And a New York artist has a cricket orchestra in her studio, living in a Gothic cottage of glass with a wire roof, and filled with ferns and grasses. She de-

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lights in their shrill reiterations, to her the merriest music, and says they are always entertaining, never having to be entertained.\*

It is my belief that all animals, birds, and insects know much more than we give them credit for. Dear little "Snapper" has learned with ease and rapidity ten rather uncommon and difficult tricks, such as ringing a bell when he wants his dinner, or turning a tiny barrel organ which plays one simple phrase, or mounting a chair and delivering an oration with earnest and appropriate gestures. And when Max and Rhad fight over a big bone until they become so angry with each other as to be completely absorbed, Snapper rushes in and slyly carries off the cause of contention. He will undoubtedly be a lawyer when he reaches our degree of ratiocination. My geese certainly do reason. Why, yes, I quite forgot. I was talking of women as geese, and here I am back again. "Do Wom-


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\* We are told in a recent charming magazine article of a butterfly as an all too transitory pet.

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en reason?"—the subject for a recent "symposium." Some women reason—logically, consistently, and less laboriously than men. I'm proud of them; and in two generations more that question will not be raised. Colleges, professional discipline, and the tremendous educational influence of our clubs will answer for us. But just now I do wish we used our reasoning powers a little more in matters of dress, traveling, friendships, and in love, religion, politics, and philanthropies. Think of the ordinary woman as a traveler! It takes five minutes to purchase a ticket, while a dozen men are impatiently waiting; then she takes a position in the middle of the door with no appreciable motive, completely blocking the way for hurrying passengers on either side. She rushes up the steps as soon as the train stops before any one has time to get out, and looks injured and vexed when pushed back by the conductor. And so on to the journey's end. If in traveling I could be as wise as a goose, and quietly follow orders plainly given, I should be spared a deal of mental agitation, and the saving of voice and



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temper for officials would be incalculable.

Women are forever hiding away their diamonds, and only after putting a gang of hopeful Italians to digging in the garbage and ash heaps can they remember just where they put them. How many women have a sense of locality, know the points of the compass, or can reason themselves back to the right road? An old cat would do far better with mere instinct. How many can keep their temper in a discussion and not make it a personal matter?

I presume every woman who has read this chapter is vexed, but they have no "reason" for it, as I could write volumes on Women as Martyrs, Heroines (or She-roines), and Angels, and no one minds the cacklings of a confessed goose.

## CHAPTER VI.

### UNPLEASANT VISITORS.

Avoid giving invitations to bores ; they will come  
without !

ELIZA LESLIE.

I HAVE just returned from New York city, escaping for a week or so from the constant and wearing rush of exciting events here, to the calm stagnation of Gotham and the Gerlach.

I was tempted there by the poultry show, and by a laudable ambition to enter Maxidar I among the smooth-coated Bernard beauties at the coming dog show. His brother took a first prize last spring, and I sent him to keep up the family honor.

Though living like a veritable hermit, and silent as a sphinx, yet I do have—  
But I must illustrate my position by a story which my grandmother loved to tell. She said that she and her playmates used to stop once in a while at a

house where two very old ladies lived, both rather dilapidated, just to hear the invariable response made to their kind inquiry :

“How do, Aunt Polly, this morning?”

“Wall, I ain’t a bit smart. I feel mighty slim. I have a sight of—a sight of—I can’t think o’ the name on’t, but I do have a sight of—of—of——”

Then she would totter to the back stairs, and, lifting up a shrill, quavering treble, would say :

“Sally—sister Sally! (She’s dreadful deaf!) SALLY! SALLY! what was it that your husband had such a sight of during the war?”

A pause, and then, in feeble, peevish tones, we heard :

“Trouble, sister—trouble.”

“Oh, that’s it. Yes, gals, I have a sight o’ trouble.”

So do I. I almost feel like greeting you in the words of another truly true old woman of old Gilmanton, who, when asked how she did, replied dolefully :

“Wall, I dew and dew, and keep a-dewin’ and tryin’ to dew an’ can’t dew. An’ haouw dew yew dew?”



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I came home from New York late on Saturday night, weary of the cackling and crowing of the hen show, but pleased that a Massachusetts man had taken first prize for light Brahmas.

As I sat down by a ruddy open fire, with the dogs crazy with joy to see me back, I quoted :

“How pleasant it is on Saturday night,  
When I’ve tried all the week to be good !”

But I was soon disturbed by unusually thrilling accounts of extraordinary experiences, and my next quotation was in prose :

“There’s nothing so certain as the unexpected.”

I did hope for a serene Sunday, but just after breakfast I heard loud screams for help from some one evidently in a highly critical position. I gathered this :

“Run for somebody ! Quick ! Quick ! Quick ! Bring the revolver ! Load it ! Hurry !”

I rushed up for two new revolvers, always loaded to be prepared for any social emergency, and when I again looked out I saw my man dragging rapidly over the

snow by the ring of the trap a—well, the Cree Indians call it a “seecawk,” and learned folks dub it the “*mephitis ching-a*,” but to me it was just a pretty little creature with pointed nose, bushy tail, black eyes, now so wild and pleading. Do you understand me?

And here let me record the bravest act I ever knew of a woman. My courageous cook seized the revolver, went out, and, putting three bullets into the animal's head, dispatched him without the least annoyance to any of us. I used to put Hannah Dustin at the top notch for female heroism. She not only killed several Indians, but returned to scalp them. But that pales into insignificance before this unparalleled instance of pluck and clear grit.

He had been wintering with us greatly to our dismay. We fear he left a family on our hands. Milton undoubtedly alluded to this intruder in *Samson Agonistes*.

“And as an evening dragon came  
Assailant on the perchèd roosts  
And nests in order ranged  
Of tame villatic fowl.”

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Governor Colby, of New Hampshire, liked to tell of an old fellow, a great brag, who used to visit the grocery store and tell amusing yarns to a gaping, giggling audience seated on barrels and squirting tobacco-juice toward the red-hot stove.

"Well, boys," he said one night, "I found twenty-four skunks under one log yesterday, and it wasn't much of a log for skunks neither."

I would not offend my readers by saying that word right out, but Governor Colby never minced matters. Do you believe me, I felt sorry for the creature when I saw the revolver flash in the sunlight and heard the quick report once, twice, thrice? He was endeavoring to support himself by living on me. But *he* didn't know it was wrong.

No, I shall not use the Saxon name, but leave you to guess what I mean, as do certain advertisers who offer large rewards for all who will first subscribe for their publication, and then fill in the right letters for a puzzler like this:

"G -- v - r Cl - v - l -- d !"

I feel strangely poetical this blizzardy

day. My capricious Muse seems luring me to further efforts. Inspiration is something quite outside of and beyond ourselves. I do not write; I am simply impelled.

Ha! she is at my elbow and guiding my pen!—

We found he had made a bunk  
Right under the henhouse floor;  
We gave him of meat a hunk,  
And he will thief no more.

We fear he ate many a pullet,  
And several young chickens we mourn;  
But now he is dead from a bullet—  
He's gone to the far-away bourn.

Heroic in times of danger,  
I confess I'm a cowardly flunk  
When near a black-and-white stranger,  
Which in whispers we call a —.

When I see a — appearing,  
If he has two legs or four,  
I don't stop to meet or greet him,  
But discreetly close the door.

Then comes the chorus, and a grand walk-around after the burial with disinfecteds.

CHORUS—"It's better to go a good way round  
Than to walk or talk with a——!"

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Dear me ! There's a knock at the door ! Who can call in such weather ? Excuse me, sweet Muse, and I will report.

It was a peddler, who wanted, nay, insisted upon selling me a "dandy sink-cleaner, with shovel combined."

No doubt it's a good thing, but I have so many of these combinations and novelties. I purchased, the other day, a clothes sprinkler which makes the Chinese method useless, and I am assured that it can also do duty as a funnel by taking something off, a strainer by putting something on, a tea ball for steeping tea for one, and I *think* he said it could be altered into a fire-alarm, a drinking-cup, a dinner horn, and—no, it couldn't really be a pair of suspenders ; but the grand final transformation was something equally improbable.

I have a set of jagged knives for smoothly cutting hot bread, although I greatly prefer to break it ; the nonmelting plate, that will rest peacefully and unharmed all day on the stove ; "essences" that smell like barbers' cheap hair oil, and will never be used. But why

weary you? These are mild afflictions compared with the picture-man!

Have any of you been rasped and tortured by his visitations? He hails from Philadelphia, has never been "on the road" before, but was induced by his employer, and a high salary, to show the country people the new and charming process of getting a perfect crayon picture from an ordinary photograph, done in an incredibly short space of time and at a minimum of expense. He was a large, aggressive man, with a swinging gait and a strident voice. He spotted me on the porch and commenced his attack:

"Madam, I am here to show to you a new and remarkable invention, by which an ordinary photograph can be taken and in ten days you will receive by mail a fine crayon portrait, done by hand, a most speaking likeness. Here are several dozen specimens. I am sure you will be pleased."

I assured him I wanted nothing of the sort, and walked into the house, he closely following.

"Pardon me, madam, but have you no

photograph of yourself? We should be pleased to undertake a crayon copy. No charge whatever unless perfect satisfaction is given."

One of my recent horrors lay on the table. His eagle eye glared, his relentless fingers clutched it. He held it out at arms' length and thus delivered himself :

"This I call a botch, madam—an absolute botch, quite unworthy of you and of the artist whose name it bears. He really does some good work. Ah! I see there is another! There! this has a little more grace of outline, a little more symmetry of form. This could be reproduced, and at very little cost."

"But I do not wish you to take it away. I can not afford to have it enlarged, and should not wish one if I could."

"I am sorry, madam, for your poverty," and he took out a fifty-cent piece and began to wipe his eyes.

He had gone too far, and was directed to the door. When he was really out of sight, I found he had taken the photo he preferred. But I trust it was an over-

sight, and that I shall not have to look upon my own features done over in cheap crayon !

We all know the persistent book agent. My house is crammed to overflowing with books of all sizes and all themes, ancient and most modern. I will not pay two dollars per month—or is it per week—for a mammoth illustrated series of pamphlets about the World's Fair. Nor will I tolerate a woman, however worthy, who will come in and squat down on my dining-room floor and exhibit books of devotional exercises for the Sunset of Life, cook books for middle age, and at last bring out picture books as just the thing for my grandchildren !

You can't shoot *these* creatures ; even a trap at the door might be illegal. All they want is money—your money ; they have no decency. All sympathy with their victims is obliterated.

Each season has its own special horrors, but in summer the torture rises to its climax. No matter how tired I am, or how busy in my sanctum, or trying to take a nap before the arrival of guests,



these dreaded vampires will not be put off or sent away; they insist on a *personal* interview. From June to August, through "hoeing and haying," it is an appeal to buy a cultivator or a mowing machine, a weed-breeder—no, a "Breed-weeder"—or, in a general way, "machinery." I sent word, the other day, that I was taking a bath and must be excused. But the aggravating creature seemed glad to hear that I appreciated the necessities and delights of cleanliness, and announced that he had come quite a distance (on a holiday, too), and would wait for me to come down. Such a specimen seldom rises when I enter, but with an air of immense importance begins his memorized harangue, presenting a fully illustrated catalogue.

The "machinery" I most ardently desire is an automatic or autokinetic propeller for all agents—a kicker that will hurl them half a mile.

After being called down twice in one hot day to say I did not want to buy a mowing machine, I expressed myself with straightforward frankness to the third

persecutor. They have an instinct that divines your needs. I did need a mower, but could not buy just then, and I said, with impressive dignity, "When I want a mowing machine I shall send directly to the city." "But we agents must live," he insisted; to which I responded with the ancient but appropriate retort, "I do not see the necessity for that!" He left highly indignant, and all at once such a fascinating scheme came to me: I would consult some practical chemist, and beg him to prepare a tanglefoot agent paper sure to snare their persistent pestilential feet as they approach from the street; something that, like a coat of tar and feathers, would be vastly unpleasant but not deadly. O what bliss to watch their prolonged and unavailing efforts to tear themselves away! But I must not let them catch a glimpse of "the lady of the house," or in their desperate contortions they would hold up in one hand, still free, a pamphlet setting forth the merits of a "Buckeye," a "Rocker Washer," or a "Chicago Dustpan," invented by a woman, and which no woman with any

pretense to good housekeeping should be one day without!

When there's nothing else to drive me distracted there is always a "tree man." I think them more trying than any other peripatetic nuisance. They do have such "staying" qualities! They are almost as bad as delirium tre——

What! Another man at the door? This time it's a "potato man," with "Rupert's Perfection" as his special subject for eulogy. I buy a peck, to be delivered in April. If I don't have to go to the poorhouse or old ladies' home before September, I may enjoy the mealy, snowflake tubers.

This morning it was a "razor man"; wanted me to let him sharpen all I had. Our interview was briefer than I had dared to hope. He saw the situation, and left without any cutting sarcasm or keen-edged witticism. He might have quoted Voltaire's epigram: "Ideas are like beards: men don't get them until they grow up. Women never have any."

Anything in life's experience told right straight out, like this tale of woe, seems unreal to those who have not been simi-

larly imposed upon. I have suffered so severely that the following exaggeration falls short of the actual facts :

Mr. Jimsmith, a Chicago lawyer, recently moved into a beautiful suburban home. He is highly pleased with it in a general way, but so many agents call upon him that he finds it rather a bore. The other day he opened the door to twelve agents before the afternoon was half over, and when he was summoned to the door for the thirteenth time he was mad enough to fight a herd of porcupines. A tall, sad-eyed man, dressed in black, confronted him and started to say something, but Mr. Jimsmith interrupted him :

“You don’t need to tell me what you have to sell, because I don’t want it. I don’t need a burglar-proof clock, nor a bootjack that has a music box in it, nor a stemwinding can-opener. I don’t——”

“My dear sir, you are mis——”

“Oh, you don’t need to ‘dear sir’ me; it won’t work! I tell you, I don’t want a gate that may be taken from its hinges and used as a folding bed. I have no use for a combined currycomb and mustache cup.

I have a full supply of furniture polish, cough medicine, and hair restorer; and, what's more, my wife doesn't need a recipe for preserving codfish or frying billiard balls."

"Really, sir, this is a most extraordinary——"

"Oh, of course, it's extraordinary, but I don't want it. I suppose it can be used to grate horseradish and tune the piano, but I tell you I don't need it. Perhaps it will take the grease spots out of clothing, pare apples, and chase dogs out of the yard, but you'll have to go somewhere else to sell it. I am surprised that a man of your age and respectable appearance should go around trying to sell pocket corn-shellors when the whole neighborhood is full of wood that ought to be sawed. What's the use of trying to sell a man a fire-escape, when you can make a dollar a day baling hay?"

"I'm not an agent."

"Then what are you?"

"I'm the pastor of the Orthodox Brethren Church, and I came over to get acquainted, not knowing that you were

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running a private madhouse. Good-day."\*

Under the heading of this growling chapter might be included some of my callers who come determined to get rid of an old canopy bedstead, or a rocker one hundred years old, or to work off some aged hens, or a venerable rooster, or an Afghan or crazy-quilt that has been vainly paraded for years at county fairs and shows.

Each one insists on seeing me "on a matter of business." Each declares that he or she "needs the money," which seems to them a sufficient reason for my purchasing at once. Each feels personally and eternally aggrieved by my utter failure to respond.

I have been so perpetually annoyed that I naturally dread to see strangers approaching with an air of business, fearing they might prove to be constables,

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\* I hear that agents in the West are actively representing an "Anti-Agent Protective Association," furnishing for one dollar a brass plate, announcing a full supply of all possible wares. Let them hasten their approach! I'll buy them out!

agents, reporters, or curiosity seekers who had heard of the place. After many provoking delays I was just starting for a drive the other day, when I noticed the usual stranger hurrying on. "O dear," I said to myself, "is there no respite from this sort of thing?" and, putting my head out of the carriage, I said in rather a petulant and weary tone, "Do you want to see me?" The young man stopped, smiled, and replied, "I have no objection to looking at you, Madam —, but I was going farther on!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### FACTS ABOUT FARMING.

"I'm sick and tired of hoeing, ditching,  
And milking cows with tails a-switching  
In face and eyes.  
There's little pay and lots of labor  
In raising corn or taters, neighbor,  
And fighting flies.

"The farm and necessary fixtures  
To me are not such pleasant pictures—  
Scythe, fork, and rake ;  
To tell the truth, I do not love them,  
And, soaring far to realms above them,  
My leave would take.

"Oh, for a season of refreshing !  
Oh, for a crop that's worth the threshing !'  
The farmers pray.  
Until one's ready for his coffin ;  
Their dying words we hear so often :  
'Farming don't pay !' "

ONE of my favorite books in girlish days was *Rural Hours*, by Miss Susan Cooper, a daughter of Fenimore Cooper.



It is a journal of the simple scenes of country life for just one year; delightful reading, like Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne*. His genial "observations in various parts of Nature" are still read with exquisite delight. He was a parish priest, and employed his leisure time in studying birds and flowers; "a man, the power of whose writings has immortalized an obscure village and a tortoise—for who has not heard of 'Timothy'?"—as long as the English language lives."

Miss Cooper, as well, wrote about what every one sees, but not as every one sees it. She records modestly her "trifling observations on rustic matters," but shows an intense love of Nature and a poetical, womanly way of studying her daily marvels. I have been looking over *Rural Hours*. How unruffled, how placidly the gentle stream of description and narration runs along!—no eddies, no noisy waterfalls, no overflow.

She began her diary on March 4, 1849: "Drove several miles down the valley this morning in the teeth of a sharp wind

and flurries of snow, but after facing the cold bravely one brings home a sort of virtuous glow which is not to be picked up by cowering over the fireside. It is with this as with more important matters—the effort brings its own reward.

*"The 8th.*—Spring in the air, in the light, and in the sky, although the earth is yet unconscious of its approach.

*"9th.*—The frogs were heard last night for the first time this season.

*"April 16th.*—Fresh grass butter from the farm to-day." She dilates practically on fresh maple sugar for seven pages, and ends with the story of a Scotch stocking weaver who bought a farm near the lake at Cooperstown, and the first spring after arrival in the country was so successful with his maple trees that in the midst of his labors he came into the village and gave large orders for sap buckets, pans, furnaces, etc. People, surprised at his extensive preparations, inquired about this grand sugar mill. He said that as yet he had tapped only a small number of trees, but he intended soon to go to work in earnest among the maples,

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and indeed had quite made up his mind. "Canny Scot" as he was, to give up farming altogether and keep to sugar-making all the year round!

Now isn't that lovely? She announces the coming of the robins, the springing up of the small yellow violets, a solitary goldfinch on the lawn, the lights and shadows on the lake, a little blue butterfly on the highway, first dish of green peas. I rejoice to find an illusion which re-enforces me in my position.

"The skunk we all know only too well. There is one in the village now which has taken possession of one of the handsomest houses in the place, and all but drives the family out of doors. For several months it has kept possession of its quarters with impunity, our friends being actually afraid to kill it lest its death should be worse even than its life."

But did nothing ever happen in these two lives? I love Nature as truly, but am not allowed much time to get better acquainted. My diary, for instance, of last week runs thus:

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*Wednesday, March 21st.*—Threatened with summary ejection in midwinter.

*Thursday, 22d.*—Stranger called with constable to complain of Maxidar I, who had knocked him down as he was passing.

*Friday, 23d.*—My man started out to exercise Dolly, her high-bred spirited colt, "Viva," and the dogs. Too complicated a job. Just out of the driveway I saw the sleigh overturned and the driver dragged for some rods, holding grimly on to the reins. Max had barked too loud. Viva threw up her pretty heels in his face. Dolly shied into the ditch. An exciting scene.

*Saturday, 24th.*—Another stranger drove in with a lady in sleigh, asked for me, and, without giving name or references, said:

"I want to borrow two hundred dollars of you to-day; will give five per cent a month on it. I need it at once."

I assured him that I had overdrawn on the bank and was in debt myself, and saw no reason for his applying to me, a woman who had many demands upon her small income.

"I presume your putting up that mon-

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strous hen house made you feel a little pinched," he persisted, "but two hundred dollars I must borrow before Tuesday, and I was sent to you as the likeliest person to get it from."

He left a sadder and, I trust, a wiser man.

*Monday, 26th.*—A tramp, almost a boy, called for a meal. He said he was "troubled with swallerring," and did make extraordinary sounds and grimaces as he emptied the plates. But as he was from New Hampshire and couldn't get work, I stuffed his pockets with sandwiches, nut, cakes, and cheese, and wished him better fortune.

Yes, I must adhere to facts, in spite of her peaceful influence and gentle jottings.

Let me see:

Yesterday saw first henhawk of the season hovering over my white Wyandottes. Noticed faint yellow light on lakelet at midnight. Was it a Will-o'-the-wisp? No, I rather incline to the theory of young hoodlums from "Hog Holler" fishing by lantern light through ice holes for my imported carp. All improvements

on the farm in the line of fruit, fish, fowl of any kind is only unconscious altruism.

To-day I'm told that big rats have invaded the potato bin. "Cozy" and "Ebenezer Castoria" are too petted and stuffed to be of the least service at this juncture. A dozen doves have invaded the barn loft and will ruin my hay. Must utilize in a stew. Doves are a hum—"Come in, Mr. Wood." "Heavy door just dropped through scuttle in stable and killed our shoat!"

It's no use! Sentiment, romance, and pretty poetic moralizing have no chance for development here.

I wonder what planet influenced my birth! Sirius or Saturn; possibly both. Still it is not always gloomy.

"Behind the clouds is the sun still shining."

*Tuesday, 27th*, has a brighter record. Received an offer from a farmer in Iowa. He writes:

"Madam: I read your article, 'One Way of Co-operating,' saw your portrait, and now I write you proposing that we become acquainted, and if we then con-

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clude that it would be best we can form a co-operative union. I am a single man of forty-eight, and am six feet in height; have a very loving heart but no wife; our girls are good, but are married very young. This leaves me in the cold, as I am in favor of men and women being mature before they marry. I wish to correspond with you, and if, after we know each other, we find that we do not harmonize, I will promise to return your letters and you can return mine, and no harm will result to either of us. If we find that it would be best to have a personal interview, we can provide for that at the proper time and place. Please describe yourself physically, mentally, and morally. . . . I served in the army during the late war, was wounded, but lost no limbs. Have accumulated some property. I believe in the science of phrenology. My temperament is the mental motive."

I copy this to show that, although solitary, it is still a matter of choice. Two famous predictors of fate wrote out my life history years ago. Each said I should

live to be eighty-two—a prophecy which has already been more than fulfilled. Each said that I should marry “very late in life.” As a queer old man said when father asked him if he had ever had small-pox, “No, but I have had chances.”

Literary old maids are blessed with remarkable longevity. If any slip out of the ranks they are apt to marry men much younger than themselves; as Miss Mulock, Miss Thackeray, etc. In our own country the same law holds good, Margaret Fuller heading the list.

Must I come to this—led about by some boy that I might have petted in his cradle? O Venus, spare me! O Saturn, give me a reprieve! Never mind if the dogcart I purchased from a Cincinnati “Cart and Buggy Company” (on the strength of their own assertions) did break down on its first trip, on my side, too, going all to pieces, like the “one-hoss shay,” and I unable to secure any redress. No matter if the terrors of the law hang over my innocent head, and that my naughty Max is always getting me into a distressing complication. No con-



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sequence in the least, if I am regarded far and wide as a repository for all undesirable, unsalable things, from alligators to zebras; nothing is of the least real importance, in the light of this "fearful looking for," which in my second childhood and senile weakness I may be left to realize! I will struggle bravely against being escorted down the "post-meridian" path by a youthful spouse whose bibs I might have embroidered! Let me turn for relief and distraction to further gems of correspondence.

A woman who fell through her barn loft and broke her left leg while attending to the wants of her poultry ventures to ask a loan out of my "abundance," and offers for sale at a reasonable price "the old carriage or parts of the first carriage that President Fillmore ever owned. We have three wheels, the hub of the fourth wheel, the axle, the driver's seat, and the eveners, the whiffletrees; both the silver-mounted handles which belonged to the doors."

My dangerous experience with a new and loudly bepraised carriage rendered

me averse to investing in this antiquated vehicle. But I did buy from her an old lantern of quaintly perforated tin, brought from Germany over six generations ago, and in return I received a poetical effusion dedicated to myself, entitled

**TO JUNE.**

*Dedicated to Miss K. Sanborn.*

Ah, June, beautiful June !

Whither art thou hastening

All too soon ?

Stay with us, stop with us, linger awhile,

That we may bask in thy sunny smile,

And drink in thy beauties that so beguile.

Stop with us, stay with us still,

Listen to the wild birds in their musical trill,

Wooing thee well with a joyous tune,

Singing a love song to leafy June ;

Go not hence to thy sisters fair,

With trailing robes and gentle air.

Kiss with a smile the violets sweet,

The marguerites stately that bloom at my feet ;

Kiss the pansies that lie in the shade,

And the wild roses that bloom in the glade.

Stay with us even till midsummer's noon—

Bide with us, dear one, go not so soon.

Ah, mild-aired and gentle June,

Thou of the sunny skies and perfect days !

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While thus we rhyme these simple lays,  
We'll tune our harps to sing thy praise,  
Rightly named the "month of roses,"  
Poets sing in songs and stories  
Of thy gentle witching ways.

One more extract from the jocose letter of a noted publisher :

"I hope that the crops are all trying to get out (I don't mean the hen crops), but the potato and sich, and that you are finding a good market for all your produce. Do you drive the milk route, or can you trust the guests with the cans and be sure that they will turn in every cent? Try the bell-punch, and see if your receipts do not enlarge. I should like to know your price for clams; we eat a good many, and will buy in the cheapest market. Turnip tops and potato skins in equal parts, boiled in milk, with nine parts water, make a very good soup for boarders; and brown bread can be palmed off on some as coffee. I only throw out these suggestions for your own benefit. I hope that you will not overdo in working the farm, and I am sure that it will be better for you not to go to

church at all, rather than to do as far too many farmers do at meeting—stand outside and chew a straw before service, and snore while the good pastor preaches and knocks off flies."

My mail-bag would easily supply material for a whole chapter, but I want now to talk seriously about farming as a paying and satisfactory business for women. I notice in papers and magazines amateurish, optimistic articles on this theme which have had a false and dangerous influence upon the piteous army of impecunious and unemployed women who are eagerly looking for something to do and some practical method of self-support. These articles speak of "dairying" as pleasant and profitable; poultry, mushrooms, violets, market gardening, etc.—treating all in an airy, fairy fashion that shows little intimacy with the truth of it.

To begin with, dairying is not a business that can well be carried on by women. As an honest farmer said to me: "I wouldn't bother with too many cows. They're allus a-goin' out or a-comin' in, or a-dryin' up, or farrer or chokin' them-

selves, or losin' their cud, or gettin' out o' paster, or may be inclined to hookin', and they die easy, though they look tough."

No desirable man can be hired for small wages, and valuable cows range in price from fifty to three hundred dollars. One must have capital to commence. It is hard to find a market, at least a paying market, for milk; harder to collect the money. The farmer sells milk at two and a half or three cents a quart, which is sold in Boston the same morning for eight cents. The cream, nicely watered, sells easily at sixty cents a quart.

If we have a calf or old cow to dispose of, butchers are instantly overloaded with the same, and "prices are 'way down." But the cows go right on eating up grain, which never seems to go down, except down their own gullets. The grain bill and milk bill pretty nearly balance, and nothing is left but a residue of fertilizer. In fact, a cow is a living machine. I've made butter that Mrs. Lincoln praised, but if I wanted to sell because I needed the pay—ah, there's the difference!

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It is almost impossible to find a cheap farm with good pasture and **RUNNING WATER** near a railroad, and a market for milk. The pay is pitiably small, and even a portion of this is withheld from you as —“surplus.” \* I should use another word with the same initial letter. This surplus is utilized for butter, which you are allowed to purchase at moderate rates. You sell me cherries. I use a part of them (without paying) for pies and preserves, which I sell to you or others.

The milk cans come back sour and dirty; these must be washed and scalded with great care, and the corks soaked in boiling water aided by pearline—for, as my cook remarks, “they are the stinkiest things!” After all possible precaution, if the weather is hot and the route long you will have it returned labeled “Sour,” and it is a loss, unless you have hens or pigs, to whom it is a luxury, and a letter warns you as follows:

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\* My nearest neighbor, with thirty cows, had a loss through “surplus” of sixteen dollars this month.

“MISS SANBORN, NO. 53 :

“DEAR SIR : Your milk is coming to us *sour*, and unless you cool it properly and send it to us sweet we can not use it.

“Your cans, stoppers, and other utensils must be kept clean and sweet. The milk should be cooled as soon as it is taken from the cow, and kept so. The water in which the cans are placed should in all cases be as high on the outside of the can as the milk is on the inside. The temperature of the water should be no higher than 55°, and below that point if possible. You will find a thermometer very useful. Your personal attention to this matter will oblige

I. GOUDEM.”

I must add that the neatest housewife will get discouraged and disgusted over said cans, as her own will not be returned, but no one knows whose from no one knows where. I have seen the remains of chicken soup, chocolate ice cream, and *omelet passé* in the dirty, malodorous depths of those dropped at my door, after stoppers are removed by a man with a hammer.

This announcement of March 2d is a fair sample of the lack of encouragement for butter-makers :

**"SPREAD TOO THICK.**—Surplus of butter makes a dull market. Receipts since New Year's have been upward of three hundred thousand pounds heavier than they were in the first two months of 1893."

The romantic word pictures in novels of rosy milkmaids, snowy arms, dimpled elbows, pretty white aprons, golden butter, yellow cream, red lips, cool, shaded dairy, rows of shining, well-filled pans, are attractive, but the reality is vastly different—at least in Metcalf!

For those who seriously contemplate cows as an easy means of support, I would suggest that they first try to lead two frisky, frightened calves from the pasture to the barn when a sudden thunderstorm is on and your so-called "help" has not returned from Rumford, and the nine cows are vociferously entreating some one to do the milking. I have known that experience. Or to churn some hot, "muggy" morning, when the butter won't "come" in three, or five, or seven min-



utes, as usual, and with weary arms on you go, turn-itty-turn, chunk-atty-chunk, round and round, round and round, trying in vain a pinch of salt, a little bit of warm water, a small piece of ice, etc., and at last set it down cellar for a few hours, then boil it, let it cool, and finally give it to the hens. That I also have endured. The hens like it, but hardly appreciate my efforts. Dairying is one perpetual job, and one needs be a Job to master it.

Then, poultry farming is a life study, a profound art. Nine tenths lose and give up who attempt it. If I should circumstantially describe the history of my two hundred fall chickens you would better realize the myriad difficulties in this direction. My hens are now rousing themselves to action, and I search the papers for prices, and read thusly:

“POULTRY AND EGGS.—Live poultry has been in excessive supply, and values are very weak, with stock pressing for sale. Fowls are 10 @ 10½ c.; chickens, 8 @ 8½ c.; roosters, 6 @ 6½ c.; turkeys, 8c.; ducks, 60 @ 75c. per pair; and geese, \$1 @ \$1.37. Dressed poultry are in small

demand. A good many lots are in poor quality, and the market is overstocked."

As the old lady remarked, "Such low rates don't pay for the wear and tear of the hens." There is no fortune in hens.

Letters come continually, telling sad stories, asking for help, and suggestion and advice. I will quote from one lately received from an especially bright woman, earnest and energetic. It tells the out-and-out truth, so seldom seen in print, in regard to women as farmers:

"Until a few years ago I lived in New York city. My husband was an artist. He died five years ago. Since then I have been a recluse, living alone on a farm that I had the misfortune to become the owner of many years ago. It used to be pleasant enough to come here for the summer, but it is quite a different matter to attempt making a living by working it. I went at farming bravely—raised chickens, ducks, and calves. The crows didn't carry away the calves, but they did eggs, chicks, and ducks at a most appalling rate. That was discouraging. The natives here informed me

that there is a law *protecting* crows—that a tremendous penalty can be enforced for poisoning the ‘critters,’ so I haven’t dared to try that remedy. Some advised shooting at the ravenous things, but seemed to hold to the opinion that it wouldn’t answer to kill one. Well, I hadn’t a shooter, and if I had I suppose I wouldn’t have dared to shoot; not that there would be any danger of killing a crow, but I’m timid about firearms generally. This year I entirely abandoned poultry raising. When I first began farming, having in mind the lovely little rolls of Philadelphia butter that I used to pay from fifty cents upward a pound for in New York, I thought I’d make that kind, and fame and fortune would follow *sure*. I managed to establish a nice little dairy—only six cows, but such wonderful ones! My six produced as much butter as did eighteen ‘scrubby’ ones on an adjoining farm. I *did* make gilt-edged butter; but, alas! when it came to marketing it I found that cow grease of any and all kinds went under the same market price as gilt-edged butter put up in the most tempting pack-

ages! So I've abandoned my lovely, petted Durham bossies; have kept just one, to supply my humble little *ménage*. As for 'garden sass,' how I did work and weed, and watch and pray,—watched for things to sprout, prayed for rain, and when there was too much rain prayed for sun! Well, when my weary back, weary from weed-pulling, would be taking a needed rest, because everything in the garden looked thrifty, and I in a mood to give fervent thanks to Him who sent just enough each of sun and rain, my neighbor's hogs and cattle would be let loose to forage, and— It's well that I hadn't an arsenal to turn upon them. My courage, patience, and garden have given out. The jolliest Mark Tapley would have a terrible dampening trying to fight against the fearful odds that make farming—at least for a lone woman—a thing to be abandoned, even for a refuge in the almshouse."

She now writes me from an insane asylum in Kansas as presiding matron—and greatly prefers the situation. If she had not retired from the unequal fight she

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would probably now be a "shut-in" in same institution.

Another bit from a bright, versatile, accomplished widow who is trying to carry on a farm near me:

"I've been attending to some little details this morning. I queried how, without giving offense, I could approach a neighbor across the way who has been using my tip-cart, roller, lawn mower, and hose constantly during the past three weeks. I queried how to ask for the *loan* of my hose, tip-cart, etc., for an hour or two. I have been living here ten years, and been "running" the farm eight of those years, during which time I have furnished a hay-cart for five farmers, and plow, harrow, etc. If I were to live it over again I would not buy a tool—not a tool or implement to mend for other people. The one of the five that *breaks* the hay-cart never can be found!

"Has the pesky cankerworm struck your trees, and are the cutworm and the potato bug eating ravenously? I wish I could abandon my adopted farm, but, alas! I find no way to do it. Shall you



plant and sow and reap and mow this year? I draw the line at tree and bush peddlers, and shake my head, put my fingers to my ears, and play deaf.

“Yours sympathetically.”

I can not advise any woman to go into farming or poultry or dairy business, unless she has a certain income and is willing to work hard and endure much. She must war eternally with insects, animals, and birds, and expect imposition, extortion, and cheating on every hand. There are compensations which almost balance these hostile forces, but they will only be found by the genuine lover of country life.

Women on the farms as I know them have too much work and too little recreation; a steady, treadmill grind, and few outings; few chances to exchange ideas and courtesies with women that are not on farms. I too often see thin, wrinkled, and careworn faces among farmers' wives. When I meet a cheery, buxom, smiling woman in a farmhouse, who cares to “fix up” afternoons, and, as the saying is,

"go" a little, it rejoices my heart, and I add, "God bless her husband!" who evidently cares more for her happiness than he does to have her toil sixteen hours out of the twenty-four. I think of the time when these overworked women were brides, blushing, joyous, eager to begin a new life in a home of their own, proud to do anything and everything for the darling John or Jack or Jerry who had won their hearts.

I ask most thoughtfully, Can nothing be done to make the farmers' wives of the next generation a little—no, a great deal—more happy, and to prevent the causes of such overwork?

No women ought to be better looking than these same farmers' wives. They should have pure country air; exercise (but not too much of it) indoors and out; the best of everything in the way of meats, fruits, vegetables, butter, milk, and eggs, and all the goodies made from these; rich cream, and delicious homemade preserves and jellies. They should have horses to drive, should belong to granges and women's clubs, and take part in the exercises

with voice and pen. They should be interested in the county fairs, the poultry shows, church sociables, and sewing societies; should have at least a yearly trip to some city; plenty of good papers and magazines, to be had now for almost nothing, considering their value; and should belong to a book club, to enjoy the newest publications. Neighborhood meetings of young and old should be held once a fortnight to talk over what has been thus enjoyed, while the children get better acquainted over their games and discussing the charming stories in *St. Nicholas* or *Youth's Companion*. It seems not a bad lot, after all.

But is this the way in which the majority of farmers' wives in New England now live? The improvement has been great in all these matters during the last twenty years. But it is still true that it is the city folks who enjoy all the farm luxuries, and the middlemen get the profits that should go to the farmers. From the time that the sap starts in spring until the last hog is killed in February, who gets the maple sugar and sirup, the cherries,



plums, and apples, the broilers, the eggs in omelet or cake, or hard boiled for jolly picnics? Who gets the spareribs and delicious sausages, the thick, yellow cream, etc.? Do not most of these in most cases go straight to market? After long years of such strenuous self-denial in matters of diet one comes to look pinched and hungry. City friends, who are so loving and devoted and hungry, from the middle of June until the leaves begin to fall—we all know them. How much they might do for farmers' wives and daughters by cordial returns of the summer's hospitality, receiving them as their honored guests, and suggesting, in a well-bred and friendly way, little improvements in matters of dress and adornment! What happiness could be given in that way; with invitations to concerts, and lectures, and picture-galleries, and drives! Two such weeks of city life each year would furnish food for a winter's growth, and cause a beautiful development of character.

I believe that farmers' wives should receive regular wages from their husbands. Call it a weekly allowance; but let each

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busy woman feel sure of three or four or five dollars every Saturday night, and an occasional share in the profits. Why not? Ah, how well it would "pay"! That is what some farmers think of first, even before the welfare of their wives.\*

Let each daughter and each son have a regular business of his or her own, from which to gain a little spending-money—a few hens, a bit of ground for vegetables, a tool chest, and pay for good jobs done, some animals to keep or to raise and sell. If this plan could be generally adopted, the exodus from New England would not be so alarming as it now is. The boys go West for a chance to live their own lives, to see a little of the world, to earn money of their own, to get out of grooves and ruts, and from under a rigid, close-fisted master whom they call father. No inducements are held out for them to remain.

Another and most important cause of

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\* Many farmers send two wives to untimely graves by terrific toil. The third has a *chance* of surviving him!

poor health in the country is the frequent neglect of drains and criminal carelessness in regard to sanitary necessities. A friend of mine that married a farmer in northern Vermont, whose home is on a high hill, where it seems as if the bracing winds would blow away all disease, lost her only son, a dear, bright boy, from typhoid fever, caused by a connection between the well and their cesspool. Near by, an eldest daughter died of the same disease from a similar cause; and when the father realized this, he grew morbidly depressed and hanged himself on his barn door. A little decent care, and all might have been prevented. I often see a half-rotten wooden drain-pipe running from the kitchen, with the drinking water too near for safety. If farmers had their dwellings properly arranged in this regard, did not sell all of their best products, and insisted upon having good roads, making driving easy and pleasant; and if their families, not even excluding the "women-folks," were allowed a drive occasionally, there would be brighter faces and happier homes.

There are in this land many farmers'

daughters who are filling high positions with grace and ease and dignity. There will be many more in the next generation. It is seldom those who have the greatest advantages that make the most of themselves. The farmer's daughter of to-day can put herself almost where she pleases by seizing every opportunity for improvement and "getting on." To rest content in the old groove is fatal. Now, to me the chatty "Round the Table" or "Arm-chair" or "Aunty" columns in agricultural papers are simply sickening from their silliness, going over the same old dribble about bachelors and old maids, and whether it is proper to kiss your escort good-night, and what will cure freckles or improve red hair, and how to do tatting and make rag rugs, with controversies on little subjects, and sometimes a show of pertness and bad temper. Those columns might be made most valuable by each correspondent taking up a trade, a business, a "fad," a study of some kind, and then reporting failure or success.

As to women's work on the farm, I

would aim to have it simplified. I would have dish-washing machines for the wives, as men have machines to simplify their labor. Laundry work should be done in some co-operative way that is feasible. There should be something to think of besides household drudgery and idle gossip. I should like to bring the city nearer the quiet country life, and would suggest an occasional long trip such as the teachers are now taking in their vacations—and they have less to spend than does the average farmer. I believe in women having time to adorn themselves and beautify their homes; and they will always do this unless crushed in spirit by never-ending toil. If I could help a little bit toward this very possible millennium, with tongue and pen, and influence and example, and letters to any who care to talk over the subject in a most practical way, I should be more pleased, more proud, than if I had perched on the north pole or had established communication with Mars.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TRIBULATIONS AND COMPENSATION.

*"Per aspera ad astra."*

I WOULD like to say that I regard most of the farmers I see as unconscious slaves to middlemen and the manure heap! They work too continuously, and are willing to stay as they are. It is not the truest independence to be tied to a plow and a hoe handle. But I dare not express such a sentiment.

If I did say it, no one would believe me. No one will allow me to be in earnest. If I tell an anecdote about myself, an actual happening, it is considered "an entertaining exaggeration." In the Midway Plaisance at the Chicago Exposition we staggered along, so warm, so weary, so footsore; and as we passed the Laplanders' village a "whipper-in" accosted us in stentorian tones, urging us not to omit the greatest curiosity of the whole

collection. His quick eye discerned our agricultural tendencies, and, enraged at our resistance of his yawping laudations, he screamed even louder as we turned away, "*No one*, who had a soul that could soar beyond a manure heap or a dish-pan, would neglect this opportunity!"

And for a moment we forgot our fatigue in hearty laughter. No one believes this to whom it is repeated.

I had to make a little bit of a speech lately to nearly three hundred bright men and women, and although they kindly laughed loud and long, I could see they did not believe one word I said, one story I told!

It's horrible to labor under this universal doubt—this regarding me as a bucolic Sapphira!

I am strictly truthful.

I can not get rid, if I would, of my New England conscience.

I told of a few things which had been said to me in all sincerity: such as the earnest comment of my faithful old colored cook, Judy Dickinson, when I had been enjoying a visit from Miss Frances

Willard. I told Judy of her grand life-work, her noble achievements; of the help she was to each one who was so fortunate as to come under her blessed influence, and how useless and insignificant and guilty I felt in contrast.

Dear Judy looked lovingly at me, and said: "I do declar, Miss Kate, ef you was only as speritous as you is littery, you would do just as much good in dis world as dat ar woman!"\*

They did not believe me!

I next repeated the criticism of a Boston man in one of the best of Boston's good shops. I wanted something to wear to New York as an outside garment.

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\* Poor Judy! I picked up the remnants of a parasol when moving, which recalled her brief but forcible interview with the young woman who had alienated her husband's affection. She returned, excited and exhausted, and thus explained the situation:

"I found dat woman sitting up fine on a sofa reading. She had big bangs; put on de style. I went straight up and faced her, and said I, 'Ef you's Mis' Dickerson, who's I? and ef I is Mis' Dickerson, den who's you, I'd like ter know?' and den I let the parasol fly right on dem bangs. She hollered, 'deed she did.'"



I could find nothing large enough that had the least pretension to style. Jackets, wraps, cloaks, capes—none would at all become me.

I stood in despair after trying on half a dozen varieties, and exclaimed in pathetic tone: "Am I really the biggest woman in Boston? Is there no help for me—no hope of getting anything?"

The "sales-ladies" gathered around in sympathy. At last it was decided to appeal to a member of the firm who did the special importing. He might possibly have something.

He came—an important, bay-windowish personage, with a fastidious, traveled expression and an eyeglass. I wished they hadn't called him. I felt small enough under his critical survey, but braced up and "stated my want."

He looked at me in silence, asked me to revolve, to be seated, to walk about, to stand still. Then, removing the eyeglass with the air of a judge delivering an opinion, he said, "I think, madam, that a woman of your formation would look best in an elongated garment."



"Formation!"

As if I belonged to the Neolithic era, and had been dug up somewhere!

And no one believed me.

I told them of the giant of a fellow seated high on a big cart, who drove in and wanted me to give him one of my books. It was a gratifying compliment, but I felt that it would be a dangerous precedent, and he was so overcome by recent libations that I hoped he wouldn't mind if I refused. He muttered that I might repent if I didn't. But as he turned around to leave he brightened up, and said:

"Look a-here: I'll give you half a barrel of shavings I've got left, and a peck of Porters, a little rotten, but the rot's mostly cut out. Is it a trade?"

And it was.

Still no one believed me.

So I stopped talking. One loses inspiration with such an avalanche of suspicion resting on each statement.

Every one imagines his own trials are peculiar, but I *know* mine are! My physical proportions are always unduly en-

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larged, and my literary pretensions looked at from the wrong end of the glass.

Only yesterday I drove down town to bring back a mammoth laundress, who, as she settled her elephantine perspiring bulk, crowded me out upon the wheel. As I struggled to regain a minute portion of the seat she looked at me with wondering eyes and exclaimed, "My, ain't you fat!"

I work three months in public and private libraries on a lecture—collect, condense, boil down some more, presenting an immense amount of labor in an off-hand style, and some one is sure to say, in a superior manner, "Yes, we really quite enjoyed your *little* talk!" even if utterly ignorant of the subject treated.

I once did my best to converse with an erudite, formal old bachelor, and at the close of the visit he said, in the same superior style, "I have really enjoyed your cheerful *prattle!*" Oh, it is too bad!

Then, the modest requests that come to me! I am positively staggered by the petitions I constantly receive through the mail. There seems to be a general long-



ing on the part of a multitude of helpless females, young and old, to be my "companion." Now, if there is one thing I am positive I do not want and will not have, and will pay large sums to escape from, it is a female "companion." Oh, the inexpressible horror!

I have questioned some of these would-be companions in this way: "Can you read aloud for hours with ease, distinctness, and expression?"

"No—have never tried that."

"Do you write a clear, legible hand, or can you use a typewriter? Can you read music at sight, or play a good sympathetic accompaniment? Are you a fine French scholar, so that you could easily pilot me if in France? Are you a German student? Can you play without your notes in the twilight, so that all who hear will love to listen and feel refreshed? Are you an experienced traveler? Can you act as courier? Can you fit a waist, or make over a skirt, or mend, or make over old clothes, or cook, or wait on table, or nurse me if I am sick, or entertain me with conversation, or keep my

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bureau drawers in order, or do ordinary housework?" No, no. Not one of all these. And no wish to learn. All that is wanted is to be my "companion," to travel, to meet distinguished people—to be supported while I suffer. A recent letter shows better what I mean. "Luella, my daughter, wishes to see you. She says she knows she shall like you. She says she wishes you had to hire a companion, and would hire her to travel with you, if only at a small salary, so she can finish her musical education, so she could earn a good living. There is no chance here but to get a few scholars, and she is so anxious to get a position. She says she wishes you would come up here. She is going to the mountains in a week or two, and says she wishes you would come before she goes, or wait until she comes back, which would be some time in September. Luella was playing on the piano this morning, and she said, 'Oh, how I wish I could earn a lot of money, so I could get me a new piano; this is a regular old rattle-trap!' She said she did not see why some girls who had a good chance to learn music



and did not care for it at all, they could have a nice new piano and a good chance to learn. I think it is too bad—she is such a good girl. I do hope you will answer this, for I certainly would like to keep up a correspondence.” (! !)

Let me now boldly state that I am determined to live and die without a so-called “companion.”

I am asked to contribute whole chapters on woman's work to other women's books, without the slightest allusion to remuneration; to lend my lectures for another woman to read, to furnish magazine articles for a new venture, sending a slight sketch of my life and a photograph; to lecture at a dozen women's clubs each season, paying expenses, and for no *honorarium* but the expressed thanks and unexpressed (to me) criticisms of said clubs. It does seem amazingly rude to request a woman to take a journey in winter weather, when such exposure may endanger life, to entertain a coterie of unknown women for an hour with an essay that has cost months of hard work, and then go home again with nothing but a

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severe cold or sore throat! I am requested perennially to read for *charity*, and have read to provide carpets, stained-glass windows, water coolers, a suit for a missionary, the beginning of a library, for aged women and homeless infants.—Also to furnish something “bright, breezy, characteristic,” in my best style, for a paper in a church fair—as if I kept a dozen such desirable sketches on hand for these opportunities for benevolence. Then, interviews where reporters swoop down upon me just at lunch-time, and no hope of relief until the afternoon train, hungry for material and all the goodies that appertain to a farm, and evidently feel that they are conferring a great honor upon me. Sister spinsters, with flourishing boarding-schools, that pay splendidly, patronized by rich families—such spinsters come to me begging an hour’s practical talk for their dear girls—such a talk (practical, original, impressive, helpful) as I could easily give. And then the good I might do! Oh, yes, dear spinsters. But I would rather see a ten-dollar bill—even if it had been torn in two and



pasted together with dirty brown paper—ten dollars with which I could help some one—than to listen to your unmeaning compliments!

I might prolong the agonies of this article by a long list of modest requests: as, being a chaperone for two wild girls for Harvard class day; to furnish long lists of books for courses of reading; to state what were the most potent formative influences of my youth. And if I go far away to some distant Eden, it is distressing to find that I am expected to “do something” all the time to furnish entertainment for a lazy crowd. “Well, what will you do for us *to-night*?” said a girl of twenty-five years to me. I replied: “I think it is your turn now. What *can you* do—sing?” “Oh, no!” “Play?” “Only a very little.” “Tell a good story?” “Bless you, never could do that!” “Play whist or chess?” “Too much bother.” “Recite or read?” “Gracious, no! I’m not a professional.” “If I were you I would fit myself to do something for others’ amusement, even if you never rise to the heights of an ama-




teur. I would not stupidly sit and expect older people to do all the 'work.'" She looked aggrieved. But her "modest request" roused for once a sincere reply.

Then I am petitioned to buy "hooked-in" rugs to save children from starving; to purchase a high-posted buggy—no, I mean a bedstead, that has been in constant use in a family for seventy years; to take at reduced rates an Afghan that the woman can not sell. She frankly states that she has tried it at three fairs, and has had it on sale at her home for two years, and no one would take it. She thought I might like it.

I like rag rugs—make 'em myself. I believe in homely, homemade decorations for a farmhouse. I visited a big-hearted woman the other day, whose husband was crippled in the war. He has a small pension, and she writes and works and does much to support and educate the family. There I saw a rug with an eagle and flag worked in, and the blood-stains on the coat-sleeve that had seen hard fighting were pathetically prominent.

The queerest thing I ever did see in



amateur art was a picture-frame to surround the face of a dear departed spouse, designed by his appreciative relict. The frame was at first covered with soft putty; on that were stuck flowers of an entirely unknown species made of shavings from the coffin. Inside this were various tender mementoes—a lock of his hair, two of his teeth which she had always kept, three kernels of corn, a bottle of homœopathic pills, of which he had taken half, several shirt buttons, the silver coffin-plate, and some raisins! She explained that once when he went to town he brought her home a whole pound of table raisins, and he said: “‘Now, Sophrony, these are for you, to use just as you like, and all for yourself. Don't stone 'em for cakes or pies. Just eat 'em yourself.’ It was real good of him, wasn't it? So I never could bear to eat none of them, when he was so thoughtful, and I says I'll preserve some of 'em right here!”

There was a piece of his last— But, sho! You will not believe me if I go on, and it would crush me to lose your confidence.

Almost as bizarre was the "Crazy Jug," a fad in our circle last year. A jug is first varnished, then covered with rice, and every sort of oddity stuck on, as a boot-buttoner, wishbones gilded or plain, hairpins, buttons large and small, half a pair of scissors, old buckles, etc., "too numerous to mention," and finally bronzed with a really artistic effect. One was presented to me, which I prize highly.

Mrs. Rollins, whose descriptions of early New England life are as accurate and clear as a verbal mirror, speaks of the ingenious attempts to beautify the home by faithful Hannah, one of those old-time servants "who never changed her place, and spun and wove and knit and stitched her strength into the fabrics of the house until her hair grew gray and her eyes dim in its service. . . . Hannah had queer ways. She was given to interior adornments, and the fruits of her needlework were thick in the house. These were not fine, but considering the material from which she wrought them, and the time and patience which she gave to them, they were worthy of praise. She pinned black broadcloth cats to the wall,

brought out in silhouette upon red flannel. As portraits they were failures, and little Benny was always saying to her that he was sure he had never seen any cats like them. She hung novel comb-cases under all the bedroom looking-glasses. These were of varied shapes and materials, some of broadcloth, some of straw, and less pretentious ones of covered pasteboard, all much stitched with colored silks. The patchwork about the house was endless. Hannah hoarded scraps of silk and cambric, and pieced them together into pin-balls, chair-cushions, and coverlets. She glued painted pictures to the inside of wide-mouthed glass jars, which she filled with flour and planted with asparagus, thus simulating quaint vases. She embossed blown egg-shells with the pith of bulrushes, coiled round bits of bright silk, and hung them upon pine boughs in the fireplaces of the front rooms. Homely handiwork, but well seasoned with the true flavor of rustic life."

Another trial has been the wondering comment on my having the good sense to love the country. My friends every-

where regarded my desertion of city life and "social duties" as mysterious and almost wrong. Had I degenerated into a harmless lunatic; or was I a fugitive from justice; or had paresis claimed me for its own? Was I simply a little more eccentric than usual? Curiosity and inquiry rose to fever height. Letters began to arrive addressed to the Mayor of Metcalf, to the postmaster, to the Poor Farm, to Holliston Cemetery Association. Mrs. Johnson, of the Sherborn Reformatory for Women, received, I believe, several delicately veiled missives of interrogation. Had I married a man I dared not display? Had a big wen grown on the end of my nose? Did I really prefer the society of hens to women, and the companionship of dogs and horses to receptions and a maelstrom of "functions"?

At last reporters were sent out on a searching expedition. Then I saw that longer concealment was impossible. I must now show my find to the world. Engraved invitations were sent to seven hundred dear friends in all parts of the civilized globe, six weeks in advance, to

be present at a rural festival, September 17, 1892, offering as attractions home-made pies, husking party (plenty of red ears), old-fashioned games, concert, regatta on lake, dance in barn, legerdemain exhibition, and a lunch under the maples. Two hundred and seventy-five loyal friends from nine different States responded, and from noon to 9 P. M. we had a glorious reunion. It is the pleasantest memory of my life here.

This was the style :

MISS KATE SANBORN

requests the pleasure of your presence at a  
Co-operative Rural Festival,  
Saturday, September 17, 1892.  
Breezy Meadows, Metcalf, Mass.  
(The "Abandoned Farm.")

Each guest may contribute some "goody"  
not indigenous to Gooseville.

Lunch at 1.15.                      Hens fed 3.30 precisely.  
Homemade pies.    Husking party.    Old-fashioned  
games.            Ride on lake.            Dance in barn.

Trains leave Boston & Albany Station,

10.55 ; 2.15 ; 4.30 ; 5.25.

Return 4.05.            Special evening train nine o'clock.

If stormy,

picnic postponed until first decidedly pleasant day.

Please respond promptly.

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I will quote from the description given by a friend :

"A few minutes' ride brought us to Metcalf, and there, upon a dais at the base of the flagstaff upon the little green, stood the radiant hostess, waving a small banner in each hand in welcome to the guests that flocked from the train.

"The programme was next read in impressive orotund by a distinguished divine :

Rural Festival and Co-operative Columbian Col-  
lation, Breezy Meadows, September 17, 1892. Pro-  
gramme :

12.28—Arrival at station. Rally around flag.  
Reading of programme.

12.35—Grand march from station. Walking the  
plank, single file. Guests will be "headed off" at  
the triumphal arch.

12.42—Halt for repairs at arch. Welcome from  
Gooseville quartette.

12.50—Opportunity for rest after remarks of host-  
ess ; physicians with restoratives at hand ; ambu-  
lance in attendance.

12.55—Announcements by marshal.

1.15—Fifteen minutes for mental refreshment.  
Recess and preparatory fast. Guests will form in  
line at Grindstone for sharpening their appetites.  
Welcome to house, barn, lake, monument, pasture,

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and orchard. Help yourself freely to the green apples. Do not disarrange the barb-wire fence. Capacity of hammocks not warranted beyond 300 pounds.

2.15—Round-up for lunch. Grand march to Morrill's Maples. The police must and will preserve order. Lunch, followed by speeches, songs, recitations.

3.30—Pilgrimage by survivors to poultry yard; hens fed.

4—Regatta on lake.

4.30—Old-fashioned games around the elm, and husking party.

6 to 7—Concert.

7.30 to 8.30—Dancing in the barn.

9—Last departing train. Final opportunity for escape.

“Arrived in front of the house, the hostess stood beneath an arch of golden-rod and clematis, spanned at top with an ornamental sign, ‘Gooseville,’ and from that position she welcomed her friends to the freedom of her house, barn, poultry-house, the ‘lake,’ ‘tower,’ and, in fact, to all of her possessions. ‘And now,’ she said, ‘we will hear from the other members of the Gooseville quartette.’ Whereupon an attendant, at a sign, removed a cover from a large box near the



front door, and out sprang three handsome geese, which ran screaming through the groups of guests away toward their quarters, followed by the shouts of laughter of the amused assembly.

“Everybody was at home at once; old friends were greeted and new ones made; the countless treasures of the different rooms, the spoil of the world-famous auctions, were looked over; the poultry buildings—including a new house about a hundred feet long—were inspected, the celebrated ‘lake’ visited, and the hour preceding the ‘spread’ too quickly passed away, the warning ‘toot-toot’ of the farm dinner-horn calling the guests to assemble for the march to the tables, which were spread beneath the maples on a neighbor’s lawn, a few rods away—this excellent arrangement freeing her own farm from all the trouble and annoyance of a large corps of helpers, reserving it for the more immediate entertainment of the guests. Arrived at the tables, friends were asked to take seats wherever their taste or inclination suggested. No reserved seats for distinguished guests; all

these friends were distinguished, hence were all treated alike.

"The after-dinner speeches were spontaneous and brilliant from both men and women.

"There was a carefully worded note from the Hon. Grover Cleveland.

"On its face a casual inquiry in regard to the kind of bait used in our lake for horned pout. It did not, however, conceal the writer's anxiety as to the political significance of the assemblage.

"Miss Sanborn's brother read the letters of regret, which he did in a manner most pleasing, and with a gravity unimpeachable. One from the Hon. Jerry Simpson, 'the sockless Socrates of the West,' urging that Miss Sanborn turn the occasion to the furthering the interests of the 'Farmers' Alliance,' and suggesting her taking the lead in that party's campaign. From the Hon. Jeremiah Rusk, speaking of the great help to the department of her Standard Work on Agriculture, and the absorbing interest he had in the valuable experiments Miss Sanborn was conducting, among them being 'the

grafting of the tomato upon the potato plant, with a view to the raising of a crop of tubers beneath the surface, and another crop, of tomatoes, upon the stalks of the plant, above ground; also the doubling of the honey crop by crossing the honey bee upon the firefly, so that the bee could gather honey at night by its own light; raising the painted variety of broom-handle,' etc. It was great fun, and more than one of the guests found it difficult to determine where the 'fake' letters ended and the genuine letters began.

"Mr. Hezekiah Butterworth, 'The Youth's Companion,' continued the entertainment with anecdotes and shrewd observations pertinent to the occasion, closing by reciting the first and last verses of an old New England husking-party song, which he had recently discovered in his old-book rambles, the last verse of which is—

'I wish I was a geese,  
All forlorn;  
I wish I was a geese,  
All forlorn;

## **Tribulations and Compensation. 161**

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I wish I was a geese,  
For they lives and dies in peace,  
And accumulates much grease,  
Eating corn.'"

And the reminiscent epistles were equally pleasant. A noted Boston man wrote:

"It was a great day. I enjoyed it hugely. I gave up my choice of three great banquets, but I would not have missed your luxurious lark for three times three times those ordinary hotel spreads. In this busy life it is not everything that sticks, but your day will abide as a story for my children's children."

And just one more:

"I never had so good a time in all my life before. Never did nine consecutive hours go so swiftly and delightfully. Everything was perfect. Weather made to order. Every detail was carried out. Your farm was fairyland. Alhambra, a little touch of Venice; all combined; every stone so immaculate; the old barn so trim and tidy; the narrow sidewalk so prim; the decorated grounds, with stacks of hay-rakes and strings of lanterns, so bewitchingly attractive; those sheaves

of ripened grain; the teter, the 'room for two,' the lake so neatly stoned up all round, the triumphal arch, the dinner, the whole thing absolutely delightful and unrepeatable—once only in a life-time."

Ah, it is in *this* way that my farming does pay! Such a glorious opportunity to repay hospitalities, to bring friends together, to give them a jolly outing! And in my new home I hope to have many a house-warming and heart-warming.

And do I then abandon farming? Not for my own benefit, but no longer shall I try to make money by selling to others. If hard-handed, long-headed, tight-fisted, squeeze-a-penny-till-it-squeals old farmers of forty years' toiling experience fail to get much beyond a mortgage and the plainest sort of living, why should I continue my well-meant but absurd efforts?

No. In the words, slightly altered, of Pope's Ode on Solitude, written before he was twelve (if he had been more mature it would not have seen the light):

" Happy the she whose wish and care  
A few well-enriched acres bound,  
Content to breathe pure country air  
In her own ground."

My own! And may I tell you about the new "Breezy Meadows"? A fine old home, nearly eighty acres of land, two swimming pools, a little forest of oak and chestnut, grand, superb, magnificent, respect-compelling old elms all about the lawns, a pond-lily pool, and, best of all, a brook. I always have hankered for a brook that I could take a personal interest in as partially my own, and surely now I have a merry musical brook meandering in graceful curves across my fields. Donald Mitchell says: "I believe there is nothing in Nature which so enlarges one's love for the country and binds it with willing fetters as the silver meshes of a brook."

The house is seventy-five years old, and one old inhabitant can remember the great event of the "raising." The men used to gather from other towns to assist. One big house, a mile away, was put up in the morning, and then, after a hearty meal,

closing with a course of one hundred and forty-three pumpkin—no, “punkin” pies—and two barrels of hard cider, this building was erected. He says that men were so elated that they skipped lightly as mice over the ridgepole, and no one was hurt.

Tearing off the papers, curious hand-painting is revealed; and one paper, which you may well believe is not to be disturbed, was put on before the invention of rolls of paper, and was made in small squares.

My antique treasures will properly be placed in that room.

Do I ever attend auctions now? Yes, indeed, and get as good bargains as ever. At a sale of horses, harnesses, and vehicles of all kinds, I arrived as the auctioneer held up half a dozen new whips, worth at least fifty cents each. Some one started with “Twenty-five,” and I boldly added “Thirty.” Then there was a strange pause, which I could not understand until an explanation was called for, and a bright-faced boy said, “You know we wouldn’t any of us bid against *that* lady.”

I also secured an astonishing carryall, with three corduroy cushioned seats, easy springs, solid wheels, queer high windows, looking as ancient and comical as Sydney Smith's famous carriage, "The Immortal," for *six dollars and ten cents!* All agreed, you see, that it was just suited to my especial style and needs.

I was half ashamed to bring it home for critical inspection, but it won all hearts at once. It could be used to carry a picnicking load, or utilized as a milk-cart, or sent to the station on rainy days for guests, or I could go out and peddle vegetables from door to door. As I have had three men come to buy it from me at increased value, I am properly pleased and proud.

Again, I went with my invaluable cook and right-hand woman to a sale of farm stock and brought home triumphantly two cows, pronounced to be first class. The auctioneer agreed to look meaningly at me when the animals I should buy were brought out, so I deserve no credit. He said to the crowd, "Gentlemen and ladies—for I am glad to say we



have ladies with us to-day—I am now about to offer for sale a dozen of the finest milkers in the country.”

A drunken man rather annoyed me by standing near me and bidding loudly, and then saying in a confidential tone: “I’m bidding for you. *I* don’t want her. She’s a bargain. You’ll double your money.” But no one minded him.

The owner was solemnly called out to testify. “Now, Mr. Wheeler, you come out here and tell all you know about these cows of yours—be it good or be it bad. If any one of ’em is gargetty or breachy, say so—say so, and stand by!”

Those I bid on and bought were characterized as “Butes, real butes,” and they do “show up” well in the fine stalls of my big barn.

Then let me report briefly on the horse question. My luck has turned. I exchanged a backer for the prettiest gray mare—high spirited yet gentle, my constant delight. Needing a farm horse, I sent in Mr. Wood, and he found a perfect wonder for thirty-five dollars! I named him “Horace Greeley” at once, that he

might show us what he knew about farming. He has but one fault, and that I sympathize with. At half-past twelve, his dinner hour, he has twice come home alone on a full canter. Well, Horace himself ran once, you know!

"Viva," the beautiful colt, was named after my Hindoo friend, but has not yet acquired his repose of manner.

All that now remains for me to tell is of my "flitting" from the old love to the new.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HOME.

No place like it !

IT is the day after the "glorious Fourth," and so forth, which means that we have passed through the usual idiocies of that dreadful holiday, are still alive with no mutilation, kept awake the night before by twanging fish-horns, bells, and crackers, and alarmed in the morning by the bursting of the old cannon, demolishing the windows of enraged and outraged householders; the procession of horrors, effigies, the average number of accidents, and the late return of the merry-makers, extremely overcome. It is over, and I am at last settled in my new home, after "most disastrous chances of *moving* accidents."

"Seem to have skipped spring?" Yes, it is an intentional because actual hiatus, not skipped or "lost," as Miss Phelps lost

a winter in Florida. Oh, no! I've been here, hard at work, worried, flurried, hurried, knowing nothing whatever about the tender, radiant miracle of the budding, blushing New Year of *Nature*. It has been chaos, siege, purgatory; a "storm and stress" period, never to be described. As the old darky aunty tersely expressed it, "I have passed through scenes and—unscenes." Moving, like *mal de mer*, measles, mumps, disappointment in love, a cold in the head, or loss of money, is something that must be endured, and no commiseration solicited. You must go through it like the clown through the flaming hoop at the circus, and, like him, come out smiling. I must now forget the Babel-bedlam agonies of "jacking up" the sills, putting down floors, tearing out partitions, demolishing defective chimneys and building up again, and—searching for *water*!

I was often congratulated on the unfailing supply of water from the hillside reservoir at new "Breezy Meadows," and I planned a generous bathroom, water in second story, big tank in attic, bigger

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hogshead in cellar, a fountain in southern Spanish court which should lull me to sleep with its musical tinkle and plash, a sprinkler of newest pattern for the garden and lawn, etc. In June the stream from the faucet became a trickle, the trickle a thread, the thread a drop, and then the drop disappeared! A dozen workmen "dry" and "almost choked" looking bitterly at me. Four hundred hens with open mouths in desperate thirst! Dogs in all probability going mad! I used to lie awake half the night studying the situation, and then fall asleep only to dream of all my faithful assistants and my entire stock lying stiff and stark in distressing attitudes, with black tongues protruding. "Diviners" were sent for from a distance to search for springs by means of a forked twig of apple, witch-hazel, or alder, which would bend to the presence of water, as the orange branch bows to gold, and—bless 'em!—those wizards did find a full supply, and my plans may now be realized. And the reminiscent chorus, as the happy artisans ply the pump-handle and the



"hands" and "foreman" "jocund drive the team afield," with throats well moistened, and big cans of molasses and WATER, enlivened by liberal doses of ginger; and water, plain *water* iced to delicious coolness, clattering cheerfully, is very similar to the grateful comments of the old woman in the sleeping-car. You have heard of her? Never mind, I want to tell it once more. She kept the weary passengers awake by exclaiming at intervals: "Oh, how dry I am!" "Ain't I dry!" "I never *was* so dry." "Dear me, how dry I am!" At last one of the sufferers arose, donned one garment, went for a glass of water, and kindly thrust it between the curtains from which the complaint proceeded. He was rewarded with effusive thanks; but no sooner had he taken back the empty tumbler, and returned to his berth, with the hope of speedy slumber, than again her voice was lifted up, different words, but the same general effect: "Oh, *wasn't* I dry?" "Never *was* so dry in my life!" "O, how dry I *was*!"

I said I knew no spring. Just once,

when rushing through "the congested district" of Boston looking for papers and mattings and rugs that would harmonize each with all and all severely "colonial," I saw a boy holding up bunches of the trailing arbutus. How I love that dainty flower! What long tramps I have taken to seek it, hidden under damp, dead leaves on a sunny bank beneath the pines! I have enough collected from poets who have sung its praises to make a beautiful gift-book; have even planned the cover of soft, rich, earth-brown leather, and the shy-pink blossoms under the dark leaves. No title—none would be needed. I can now smell the fragrance of the bouquets of these beauties which used to be hung on my door. But I looked at those shy darlings of the woods in a sad, dazed way, and plunged into a store for a bargain in draperies! The day before, the only folding bed I ever owned (one warranted safe for a lady, with no tricks, and perfectly sound) was being taken to pieces, and the heavy top fell hard upon my head. It hit upon a hollow where

the phrenologists say that Reverence is absolutely lacking, or I should have been instantly killed. That, with a score of similar casualties, may have temporarily dulled my senses, or I could never have passed those dearly loved heralds of spring. Once I was tripped up by my own shoestring when carrying some precious old china, stumbled over a small table and followed its descent, spilling an ink-bottle on a new and light carpet. Again, in struggling up-stairs with too big a load, handicapped also by impeding skirts, I have fallen up instead of down, skinning my knee and bruising my forehead.\* But I forget my own creed—"Grin and bear it," and never bore even your dearest friends by a tale of woe. I have had a pessimist with me, and it is depressing and tiresome. For a morning greeting, he would tell me that the fence I had mended "war'nt done no

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\* I felt like crying like a child who is hurt, but went to the window brushing my damp hair from a damper brow, only to be accosted by (yes, truly) another agent who called up: "I hear you have purchased this place recently. Have you ever contemplated buying a mower?"



way thorough, and all the cows got out and were off half a mile before the men could catch up"; or that "the hens were most on 'em broody, seemed possessed to stick to nests, were thin as snakes, and ought to have more care or they'd all die." He had a touch of malaria, and was in wholesome fear of "gems," which he had read about, and imagined dread results.

"Lead pipe didn't poison *everybody*, but it did some; but he didn't want to say nothin'," and so on.

Let us number "only the sunny hours"; as the brave little boy who went berrying said, "I held up the full pail to mother, and didn't say anything about the briers." There are times, though, when the afflicted soul cries out for some relief, for some proper verbal explosives. I seriously thought of borrowing a parrot, but recollecting that an excellent minister had said that human nature needed some explosives, I carefully coined an expression which has proved a relief to me, as it sounds bad, but is free from profanity. One of my friends, when deeply roused, exclaims "*Sugar!*" on the principle, I

suppose, of lumping what she does not like.

As to furnishing my house, I am not one of those fortunate people who can live on one hundred and fifty dollars a year, and have every comfort and save something too. Nor have I ever taken kindly to the "four B's"—*barrels, burlaps, bones, and bay leaves*—for economic catering and homemaking.

Are you not all weary of directions, full-length, for making barrel chairs? Every one knows that he can construct something to sit on out of a barrel; why continue the study endlessly? I once advised a friend to take a popular journal for ladies.

"Does it always have a column devoted to barrel chairs?" she asked.


"Oh, no," I replied. "It has the best women writers as its contributors."

She sent for a sample copy, and the first words that met her eye were explicit directions for making a double-barreled chair!

Then—burlaps! If the skillful wives of army officers, who have a special gift

for furnishing their quarters effectively from the contents of a moderate-sized trunk, aided by soap boxes and a piano case, choose to drape with burlaps or line their walls with the same, all right; but it seems unnecessary constantly to urge its claims upon housekeepers in ordinary life. The furnishing was lately described of a large parlor with odds and ends of furniture covered with red canton flannel and unbleached cotton in stripes (like a barber's pole), finished with a cheap worsted fringe knotted in with a crochet needle. This savage combination was used even to "treat" three-legged wooden stools, much better looking without it. The result—semi-surgical, semi-patriotic—must have been bad enough to enrage a bull in the next county. Then, nothing soils more quickly than this red flannel, with its rough nap absorbing all the dust, and nothing looks more hopelessly dirty when soiled. *Burlaps*, in this case, would have done better.

I once studied a prize article on How to live on Five Hundred Dollars per Year. Each needed article was enumer-



ated. I remember that some garment, as universal and essential as overcoat for the master of the house, was entirely forgotten. Then, providing for the table, the glowing word-pictures that make my mouth water, of delicious meals made of almost nothing and pronounced perfect by two able-bodied, hungry men—that is aggravating to the average woman who can not perform miracles.

This is the usual story. John sends word to his bright-eyed, loving little wife, Jennie, that he will bring home an old college friend to dinner.

There is nothing in the house but a small loaf of bread, a smaller piece of beef, and the usual vegetables that are kept in stock in every house—and a good supply of *bay leaves*. Molly, a raw, untrained Irish girl, makes, with little help, a most savory soup of the beef bone, and bay leaves float on the surface; the remnant of beef makes croquettes—a few bay leaves surrounding the platter; the bread appears, as do actresses, in three different ways—dice-toasted, thick squares by the dinner plate, at last as a bread pudding

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disguised by raisins and spices. The linen is always spotless, the glass and silver shining, and the two hungry men are filled and serene.

Is this a general experience? Do bay leaves and a shining soup-spoon satisfy *your* "two men"?

The men who visit me hope to meet the fattened calf at Metcalf, with plentiful and appropriate additions. May we not hope—feebly, to be sure, but still hope—that there may some time be a blessed surcease of this too chronic twaddle about sitting in barrels, living on love and shining silver, and generous gorges on bones and bay leaves?

There are other fallacies which need to be forever refuted—that literary women are not good housekeepers, and that an unmarried woman can not make a home and knows nothing of cooking.

Both in England and in our own country there are many distinguished authors who are also good wives and mothers; women in happy, well-kept homes, with husbands proud and fond, sure of three good meals a day and every button on.



Go back to Elizabeth Carter, and see if you can not find old maids also in plenty who were practical as well as literary. Miss Carter was pronounced by Dr. Johnson to be "the best Greek scholar in England." He said, "A man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table than when his wife talks Greek." My old friend Mrs. Carter could make a pudding as well as translate Epictetus, and work a handkerchief as well as compose a poem. (English spinners were addressed as "Mrs." after fifty.) Hannah More, Jane Austen, Joanna Baillie, Miss Mitford, Miss Martineau, Caroline Herschel, and many others, were famous housekeepers. Eliza Leslie, one of our bright writers forty years ago, published a cook book from tested recipes. Catherine Beecher published a most useful book on household economies.

I intend some day to publish a practical book giving other women "the gist" of my experience as a homemaker, and I believe I can astonish and help some unbelievers. But I will not boast; only

make a mem. to buy a copy when you see it advertised!

Yes, it is summer now. The birds tell me that, and the trees they love to live in. I am glad to say that my new farm, with its brooks and groves and large solitary trees, is just a paradise for birds. They seem to have a sense of proprietorship.

In the great drooping elm just south of the house there is a colony of nests. I see the Baltimore oriole below, and above the golden-winged woodpecker. The quick flash of their wings and their loud, cheery call contrast charmingly with the quiet flitting and rich, low notes of the brilliant "hang-bird." There is a long, dead limb of the same tree, honey-combed by woodpeckers of the past, now the abode of a tribe of cliff swallows. They have adopted an abandoned home, and in still evenings they twitter and circle about in the enthusiasm of entomological research: not so bold and sweeping in their flight as their cousins and neighbors who prefer my chimneys, and spoil my newly painted fireplaces with dropping soot and broken eggs.



In a larger hollow of the old elm there was a nest of little owls. I have seen several fly-catchers in a pear tree near the brook. May they be blessed with large appetites! And the robins, lots of them, started housekeeping with me. I sympathize with a remark of the late Senator Stanford. When his gardener told him that the robins were getting his whole crop of cherries, he said: "Ah! Why, then we must plant more cherry trees." I sit on the porch at twilight and listen to the whip-poor-will, the catbird, and the quail, but the robin's song is the best of all.

I can not write scientifically or in long detailed observation of the habits and manners of birds; could never spend a whole afternoon lying on a hill concealed by bushes and armed with an opera-glass, and then report accurately all I saw. Life is too short for me to care to learn the languages of birds or monkeys, or carry a phonograph into the hen-yards. But I love birds and value their friendship. I even aspire to a nest for myself in one of the gigantic twin elms that meet over the northern driveway.



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There, on an aërial platform, embowered and shaded, with cool breezes to refresh and exhilarate, I may yet have a "high tea" for a few favored friends. I do not object to the theory of arboreal ancestry, and only wish I had not lost the art of climbing. I do not think of much else to report. I still keep ducks. A duck has been well defined as "a waddling appetite." Hens don't pay (*me!*). I must follow Lowell's example, and read aloud to them on rainy days the Lay Sermons of Coleridge. He says the effect was magical. My hens lay plentifully when eggs are at the lowest price.

A woman must needs be sharper than a razor to farm and not become bankrupt. Nor is it women only who fail to make money from the ground.

In a recent newspaper an amateur mushroom grower recounts his costly experience, headed, "\$900 for One Mushroom" —a fact also. How I did revel in his story, and chuckle over my decision last fall not to try mushrooms! I bought a book of instructions, but was discouraged by the difficulties. I have all sorts of sugges-



tions sent me by interested friends, and one read in this way :

"The United States is not yet a large mushroom-consuming country, but I judge that she soon will be. In France, some operators produce from five hundred to three thousand pounds per day. There is a great future for the mushroom business in America, and more than a hundred fortunes await those who are prepared to engage in the industry."

Ah, yes! And they can so easily be cultivated in a common cellar or in a horse stall. Oh, how I long to give the entire story! He says that about three years ago a fiend in human form, with a mushroom brain, suggested that he had just the place to make money from mushrooms; sell from seventy-five cents to one dollar a pound; tremendous profit; demand always greater than the supply; clear income of fifty thousand dollars a year!


First conclusion: "There's a vast difference between a fine mushroom bed and a bed of fine mushrooms."

He went through all the mushroom lit-

erature and then knew less than nothing. They are raised in heated manure. First it was too wet; next season too dry; third season the horses had been fed on soft feed—must have hard feed. His house cost him nine hundred dollars, and from all this he grew one mushroom!

Let me earnestly advise every woman in search of a paying business to avoid mushrooms.

I have recently been assured that there is money in gooseberries, especially the green gooseberry. I don't doubt it. Let it stay there. I am weary of these highly colored stories of profit in anything that comes out of the earth but—tobacco and whisky. I ought to have seven hundred bushels of potatoes this year, but— Oh, yes—but— *But*, the "droot" and the bugs! I couldn't allow a friend to go to Princeton to be educated, I am so prejudiced against the combination of black and yellow! My present "manager" is a Boanerges whose voice can be heard distinctly for half a mile, as he urges on the faithful "Horace" or accelerates the home-coming of the cows. He rises at



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half-past three and works until it is dark, then sends for a lantern and keeps right on. *He* believes there is money to be got out of a farm, and is trying for it. I have offered him half of the profits, and will gladly report his success. *Then* I will have a house-warming indeed, and every one interested in my ventures will be more than welcome.

Woman is said to be like a cat : she can certainly make a home wherever she can cuddle down and purr. This home, my second adoption, is all my own, and I am so grateful for it, so happy in it, that it will never be "abandoned."

" Man's greatest strength is shown in standing still ;  
The first sure symptom of a mind in health  
Is rest of heart and pleasure felt at home."

THE END.







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Abandoning an adopted farm.

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